

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY

THE HUDSON VALLEY MYSTERY



CRAIG STEPHEN COPLAND

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Published by:
Conservative Growth

1101 30th Street NW

Washington, DC 20007

Cover design by Rita Toews.
ISBN: 1500792373
ISBN-13: 978-1500792374

DEDICATION

With apologies to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Washington Irving.

And with profound respect for the men and women who now make up the
NYPD.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I discovered *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* while a student at Scarlett Heights Collegiate Institute in Toronto. My English teachers – Bill Stratton, Norm Oliver, and Margaret Tough – inspired me to read and write. I shall be forever grateful to them.

The plot of this novella is adapted freely from Conan Doyle's *The Buscombe Valley Mystery* and mashed together with *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving. Your enjoyment of this book will be enhanced by a quick re-read of these two great stories.

My dearest and best friend, Mary Engelking, read all drafts, helped with whatever historical and geographical accuracy was required, and offered insightful recommendations for changes to the narrative structure, characters, and dialogue. Thank you.

Many words and whole phrases and sentences have been lifted and copied shamelessly and joyfully from the sacred canon of Sherlockian literature. Should any word or turn of phrase strike the reader as the *mot juste*, you may count on its having been plagiarized. The same goes for Washington Irving.

For the very idea of writing a new Sherlock Holmes mystery I thank the Bootmakers, the Sherlock Holmes Society of Toronto.

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1 ACROSS THE POND

Although over a decade has passed since our memorable voyage to New York, the singular events of that strange adventure remain fresh in my memory. It began in London one morning when my wife Mary (née Morstan) and I as we were seated at breakfast. The maid brought in a telegram. It was from Sherlock Holmes and ran this way:

Have you a couple of weeks to spare? Have just been wired from America in connection with the Hudson Valley tragedy. Shall be glad if you will come with me, accompanied by your dear wife of course. Air and scenery perfect and an opportunity for an overseas adventure. Leave Saturday on Cunard's new Campania. Client will pay for first-class return.

"What do you say, dear?" said my wife, looking across and me. "Shall we go?"

"I really don't know what to say. I do have a responsibility to my list of patients."

"Oh darling, you know perfectly well how the English loathe becoming ill during the summer. Most of those on your list will cancel if the morning is sunny. Ansthruther will look after those few who do show up. We're both looking a little pale after that miserable winter and damp spring, and the change would do us both good. You so enjoy helping Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and the journey would be rather romantic for the two of us, would it not?"

"You are quite right, my dear. It would be splendid – a first class ocean crossing and tripping the light fantastic on the sidewalks of New York. And goodness only knows what Holmes may have gotten himself into. But if we are to go we shall have to make arrangements and begin packing at once. We have only two days to prepare."

My experience of camp life in Afghanistan had at least had the effect of making me a prompt and ready traveler. My

wants were few and simple and by the evening I had packed a steamer trunk and my valise and was ready to depart. My dear Mary, being a refined young English woman, of necessity took much longer. By Friday evening she was ready, so very early on Saturday morning we took a cab to Euston Station and boarded the train to the Port of Liverpool.

Sherlock Holmes was pacing up and down the wharf, his tall gaunt figure made even gaunter by his gray traveling-cloak and close-fitting cap.

"It is really good of you to come, Watson," said he. "It makes a considerable difference to me, having someone on whom I can thoroughly rely. Aid once we reach America may be either worthless or else biased. And Mrs. Watson, it is so very good of you to come as well," he added, smiling mischievously at my wife. "And so thoughtful of you to bring your father along with you. Oh, pardon me. I should say your husband."

We laughed together. I could happily excuse being the brunt of his jokes since he made so few of them. His good humor was an unmistakable sign that he had embarked on a case that was far beyond the normal run-of-the-mill burglary. He scampered up the gangplank like a schoolboy on an outing, and moved quickly to a part of the railing from where we had a clear view of the ocean.

"It never ceases to amaze me, Watson, how a part of the world that is so featureless and boring as the ocean can be the locus of so many and varied nefarious crimes, and the incubator of such a wide-ranging collection of criminals. Do you, as a medical man, believe that there might be something in the sea air, or the over-exposure to the elements of Nature that leads men to behave so badly?" he mused.

"No, my dear, Holmes," I replied. "Nature, as you know, is entirely benign. I suspect it has far more to do with having several hundred people of all classes held together in a

confined space for days on end with no means of escaping each other. I should think that these are the conditions that lead not only to any number of crimes, but also to the giving and taking of marriage, the forming and breaking of business partnerships, and no doubt, the conceiving of innumerable children."

"Ahh, right you are, my good doctor. And how many confined souls altogether are there to be on board the Campania?"

"I believe that there are well over two thousand passengers and nearly one thousand staff."

"If your theory is correct then, before we make the port of New York we shall see some of every type of behavior you have described. Perhaps, if we are fortunate, there may even be an interesting crime or two to break up the otherwise tedious uneventful passing of time," he said.

Most normal citizens of the Empire would not have considered themselves fortunate if they were to be involved either directly or indirectly in a crime, but then Sherlock Holmes was not what anyone who knew him would describe as a normal citizen. He became beyond sullen and unpleasant when for any period beyond a week he was without an opportunity to match wits with a diabolical criminal, or entirely miserable if an interesting case were to arise for which he was not consulted by the powers that be. I could not bring myself to hoping that there would be some rather nasty criminals on board with us, but if there were then I could only wish that they would be hunted down by the determined master detective.

*

The Campania cast off by mid-afternoon and we began our journey to America. As I feared, nothing eventful happened on either the first or second day. Holmes contented himself with reading his pocket Petrarch and some of the journals he had brought with him, and writing the first draft of a new monograph concerning the forensic

qualities of the various types of human hair and the specific identifying qualities of strands according to the various moist parts of the human anatomy from which they originated. Regrettably, his discoursing on them did not make for the most appetizing of conversation over dinner.

The passengers were a gaggle of all rungs on the social ladder. Those sharing the first class with us were the well-bred and educated and who, on learning that the famous detective was in their midst, did not hesitate to pronounce their confident verdicts on all the crimes that had occurred in London during the past decade. Holmes barely tolerated these self-appointed Solomons. I had to remind him several times that many of them would someday be calling upon him for his discrete assistance and that rudely telling them that they were imbeciles was not in his enlightened economic interest.

In the third class and steerage sections there was an abundance of eager single young men and young women, all off to America to seek their future. Some of the young women, although lovely to look at, were rather brazen in their attempts to make the acquaintance of men on the upper decks. I noted my disapproval of such inappropriate behavior, but my good wife rebuked me.

"John, darling, they did not have the luck to be born into wealthy families. Their only fortune is their face. They have the courage and determination to make a life for themselves in America that would be impossible in England. And it is only fair that we cheer them on."

Even I had to cheer when the Captain was called upon to perform a wedding ceremony on the third day, and then another on the fifth. Two strikingly beautiful young women became brides and were applauded by all of their cohorts. The two young men, both from well-to-do families were, I feared, overtaken by their animal spirits at the expense of their common sense. Nevertheless I clapped them on the shoulder and wished them well. Neither couple was seen

again on deck and did not emerge from their cabins until we were let off in New York.

The last time I had been to sea was in a troop carrier on my way back from service in Afghanistan when the seas were rough, the weather miserable, and my leg wound from the cursed Jezreel bullet still giving me great pain. This journey could not have been more different. Mary had not been to sea before and this unique opportunity to do so with top drawer posh treatment was a luxury for both of us.

We spent many romantic hours strolling arm in arm around the promenade and gazing out on the moonlight over the ocean. When the Captain heard that Sherlock Holmes was on board he immediately invited us to dine at his table. The white glove treatment and choice cuisine was indeed a treat.

As I had hoped, in a necessarily morally twisted way, several crimes were committed and the Captain immediately called upon Sherlock Holmes to solve them. For Holmes these were distinctly non-interesting events and no more than diversions, but he nonetheless put his genius to work on them. On the second day he tracked down a jewel thief who had purloined the necklace of a wealthy but careless dowager. On the third, in response to the pleas of a desperate mother, he demonstrated to her daughter that the young man she was going to meet in New York, whom she knew only by way of his lyrically passionate correspondence, was a notorious lecher. Holmes did this by calling upon his prodigious memory and reciting word for word, but sight unseen, the contents of several of the letters she had received, and that he had observed copies of in the hands of two other equally duped young maidens during the past five years.

Sherlock Holmes himself was set upon by four different women, all spinsters of a certain age who, having learned that he was a bachelor, determined that he should not remain so. Their efforts were in vain and Holmes quickly

dispatched them by reading some highly indelicate passage of his current monograph of the forensic qualities of human hair, particularly those strands . . . Enough, dear reader; I have already drawn your attention once to this topic. Suffice it to say that his suitors quickly lost their interest.

I was itching for Holmes to give the details of the Hudson Valley tragedy to us but I knew that he would do so in a time of his choosing. This time arrived on the second last day of the voyage when Holmes asked if we would join him in his cabin and have the stewards bring lunch to us instead of eating in the dining room.

He had an immense litter of papers scattered over the bed, the writing desk and the floor. Some had notes attached to them, others were bound together with ribbons. Those on the small dining table were rolled into a gigantic ball and tossed over onto the day bed.

"Have you heard anything of the case?" he asked.

"Not a word. I had not noticed any mention in the London papers and I only occasionally look at the New York Papers in the club. Their lurid accounts of murders, robberies, frauds, and the violations of the innocent are altogether too disturbing for an Englishman."

"The London press had only a brief mention," said Holmes. "The New York papers, which our client sent to me, along with copies of the police reports, had quite full accounts, and the particulars would lead one to gather that it is one of those simple cases that is so extremely difficult."

"Are you being deliberately paradoxical, Holmes?" I asked.

"Yes, but it is all true. On the surface it is a featureless crime. A young man went mad and murdered his father."

"So wherein is the crime to be investigated?"

"We do not yet know. I will explain the state of things to you, as far as I have been able to understand it, but until I have had to opportunity of looking into the data I cannot take the story on the surface for granted.

"You have, I am sure, seen some of the paintings of the Hudson River School of artists. There are a few at the National Gallery are there not?"

"Yes, Mr. Holmes," answered Mary. "They are all rather wild and romantic, and painted on large canvasses, as if the artist were trying to overpower the viewer with a sense of the majesty of the Almighty."

"Precisely. The long valley has many towering precipices and waterfalls and vistas that are claimed to have some grand spiritual transcendence. Conversely, there are places that are said to be ghostly and frightening, with no end of legends attached to them. As men of science, doctor, we put no store in these fables one way or the other; for neither good nor evil. Nature, as you have observed, is entirely innocent and it is only the heart of man, desperately wicked as it can be at times, that turns a place that is only a bog with fog on top of it into a locale so fraught with superstition as to induce madness in those who dare to go there.

"Now there are also many parts of the Valley that are quite plain and have become the homes of successful and prosperous farmers, or the country estates of the wealthy from New York City. The place in which this crime occurred is one such place. It is called Tarrytown and is no more than a pleasant village along the Hudson River where it widens out into what the Dutch settlers named the Tappan Zee.

"The largest landed proprietor is a Mr. John Turner, who made his money in California as one of the Forty-Niners. His neighbor, and longtime business partner, Mr. Charles McCarthy has, or I should say *had*, for he is now deceased, a property nearly as large, and adjacent to Mr. Turner's. He likewise made his fortune in California working beside Turner on a claim not far from the original Motherlode at Sutter's Creek.

"McCarthy had one son, James, a lad of nineteen, and Turner has a daughter of the same age. Mrs. McCarthy, who is our client and to whom we must give our gratitude for this

luxurious voyage, is still living but Mrs. Turner passed away some years ago. All of these decent folks, along with their help, were regular members of the local Presbyterian Church. They appear to have avoided society and none were given to any condemnable vices as far as we know, although Mrs. McCarthy, her son James, and the Turner girl, Alice, were often seen together attending and occasionally performing at the summer theater. They were known to have made numerous trips to the Broadway district in Manhattan and are reputed to be devotees of our old friends Bill and Artie."

"Holmes is referring," I explained to my puzzled wife, "to William Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan." She nodded and smiled.

"On June 3rd, that is full three weeks past, young McCarthy arrived home from Harvard. Two of his classmates were due to arrive the following day and together they, and Miss Alice, who had been studying at Radcliffe College, were planning boating outings on the river and working together on some sort of theater review that they hoped to stage the following school year."

"All very normal, so far," I observed. "Just the sort of things that students would be expected to do in June."

"Exactly," said Holmes. "However things did not remain that way for long. In the early hours of the morning a single gunshot was heard. The household came running into Mr. McCarthy's library and saw him stretched out over his desk, dead with bullet in his head. Young James was looking out the open window and holding a revolver. He returned to his father's body and collapsed in tears upon it. Mrs. McCarthy entered the library and fell down beside her son in great distress as well. One of the staff, a young negress serving-girl named Patience Moran, reported that she heard voices coming from the window but her statement has been given short shrift by the police due to the girl's age and race.

"The mother told the girl to run for the doctor and the police. The local constable arrived within a few minutes,

followed by the doctor, who pronounced the victim dead. The constable wisely sealed off the room and as much of the surrounding property as he was able to and told all concerned not to disturb anything until the police detective arrived in the morning, there being none in the village and the closest one having been sent for from Yonkers.

"The Detective, a Mr. Paul Leverton, arrived on the same train as the two students who were coming to visit. The students were met by Miss Alice and her father and told the terrible news. Mr. Turner requested that the police allow them all, along with James McCarthy, to have a quiet time of prayer together. The shock had been very disturbing to all and they were in great need of quieting their own hearts and seeking the guidance of the Lord."

"Did you not say, Holmes, that these were all nineteen year old students and knew each other because of their shared interest in theater?"

"That is correct, Watson, and what, may I ask, would you deduce from that?"

"One can never say that theater-loving students would not be devout believers whose first instincts would lead them to prayers, but it is highly unusual, is it not?"

"Precisely, my friend. That was the second inconsistency of the report. The first, as I assume you noted..."

Mary interrupted, "The young man standing at the window while his father is lying dead at his desk."

"Ahh," said Holmes, "you are both doing rather well. What happened next was even less explicable. The elder Mr. Turner, who is apparently not in good health at all, reported to the police that James McCarthy had, following the prayer meeting and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, confessed to the group that he had murdered his father. The police detective was surprised and immediately sat the young man down to interview him. What happened next is one of the things that makes this case so intriguing."

"And that was?" I said.

"The young man sat meekly in front of the detective and gave a full confession. When he had finished he suddenly became stark raving mad. His eyes went wide with terror, he jumped up and began pacing back and forth, flailing his arms, spitting saliva, and shouting that yes it was he, he was the killer, but he was not James McCarthy. He growled that his body was now owned by a dark and evil force and that force had done the murder. He kept shouting vile obscenities at all around, pacing and flailing, and uttering gibberish.

"The police detective forced him back into the chair and demanded to know the name of the evil force. The young man shook violently and then whispered, slowly and deliberately, 'I am the Headless Horseman. I have taken my vengeance upon Charles McCarthy,' and then let out the most evil sounding laugh."

"Holmes," I sputtered. "The Headless Horseman? Was not that some character out of a tale by that writer, Irving? Where in the world did that come from?"

"From right next door," Holmes said.

"Holmes, please, no riddles."

"Of course not. I'm sorry. There is a valley on the north side of Tarrytown that for over half a century has been known by the locals as Sleepy Hollow."

"The site," added Mary, "of the legend of the Headless Horseman."

"The very place, and we shall be there in a few days to give our hello to the decapitated Hessian trooper," said Holmes, now quietly rubbing his hands together. "Back to the crime scene. The young man kept up his raving non-stop, shouting about a headless horseman on the galloping stallion, quoting Bible verses, shouting soliloquies from Shakespeare, and generally raving on and on like a total madman.

"The police detective and the doctor agreed that he had lost his mind and they took immediate steps to have him shipped off under guard up the river to the village of

Mattawan where the State had only recently opened a large and splendidly equipped prison for the criminally insane. And there he sits to this day.

"The attendees at the prayer meeting all gave the police the very same story; that James had quietly confessed to them that in the middle of the night he had been awakened by a wintery blast in the room, had felt himself overtaken by a force that he could not control, walked from his bedroom to his father's study, saw his father sitting there, grabbed the pistol that was on the desk and fired it into his father's head. As soon as he had made his confession to them they notified the police detective who, as I said earlier, asked to hear the confession himself and was met subsequently with the fit of madness."

"And why," I asked Holmes, "are you so sure that the lad was not overtaken by madness. It is obvious that do not believe him to be mad or we would not have undertaken a voyage to America."

"I was contacted by the boy's mother," he replied. "Her message to me began – here, I will read it:

Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes: I have no other place to turn to and I beseech you to help. I cannot argue with the police or the medical experts, but I can only say that I know, in a mother's heart, that my son did not murder his father, and he most certainly is not mad.

"If I have learned anything over the years," Holmes continued, "it is that when it comes to insights into the behavior of their sons, mothers are seldom if ever wrong and theories to the contrary are the merest moonshine."

"Is there a possibility that he would be convicted and hung?" I asked.

"Circumstantial evidence is a very tricky thing, and only a decade or two ago there would have been," answered Holmes. "Many men in both England and America were wrongfully hanged who had clearly lost their minds. There has been some progress recently and now we in England put them away in Broadmoor, and the Americans in these new institutions they are building all over the country. As long as

the young man remains mad in the eyes of the courts, he will not be harmed. This much we know.

“There are many other things about this case that are unknown and until we have acquired sufficient data concerning them it is best to keep our minds open to all possibilities. Although I confess that I am beginning my investigation with the assumption that the boy’s mother is right.”

2 THE SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK

Friday morning, our last day on the Campania, began at the ungodly hour of five o'clock. There was no point in trying to sleep any longer as the decks outside our cabin were alive with shouts and loud conversations. The great booming ships' horns blasted away every few minutes. In the distance we heard similar blasts from a countless number of other vessels. So Mary and I rose and put on sweaters to keep us from the morning chill and mist, and ventured out onto the upper deck. Sherlock Holmes was already there and enjoying his pipe.

"Could you kindly tell me where we are?" I asked one of the stewards. "I cannot see anything in this morning fog. What is all the commotion about?"

"Right sir," he replied. "We're entering the New York harbour. If you will just keep your eye lookin' front and port side you will see her come into view. And a wonderful sight she is sir. She's just three years old but I've seen her like this several times now, and it still stirs me heart to watch the passengers, particular the ones below, and how they re-act to her, sir."

The tugs had pulled us through the narrows at the mouth of the harbour and were moving us steadily towards the city. I kept looking up and to the port side but for nearly twenty minutes saw nothing but foggy darkness, which the morning light was only now beginning to penetrate. Then I saw what was at first was only a dark shadow on the horizon. The shadow became a dark column, and then slowly acquired the shape of the great statue of Lady Liberty. As soon as she came into clear view I heard a cheer go up from the lower decks. Below me there were hundreds of passengers

crowded ten or twelve deep against the rails of the open section of the bow. As I watched I saw fathers lift their children to their shoulders. Husbands and wives placed their arms around each other and held themselves close. Three couples kissed each other passionately in full public view. Rather poor taste, I thought.

Holmes, reading the look on my face, said, "It is to be expected. They are French."

Grandmothers and grandfathers held the hands of their sons and daughters who in turn held onto the hands of the grandchildren. Here and there entire families had dropped to their knees and were engaged in prayer. Older Jewish men were looking at the passing statue and slowly rocking their upper bodies back and forth.

A group of rough looking young men, from which country I could not tell, linked their arms over each others' shoulders and began to sing the American national anthem. The words disappeared after "Oh say can you see" and became only la la la la la, but the tune was loud and unmistakable.

"It is to be expected," said Holmes. "They are Greek."

Watching the huddled masses, yearning to breathe free, as they entered a life in the new world is an experience that I have only had once in my lifetime, and one that I will never forget. I suddenly felt rather small, knowing that while we were here only to help a family resolve a crime, these hundreds below us had arrived intent on building whole new lives, families, and communities. I confess that a tear or two did come to my eye. I reached my arm around the waist of my dear wife and she returned the loving gesture. We held each other until long after the Statue of Liberty had fallen well back of the stern and we approached the pier and battery at Castle Garden on the southern tip of the island of Manhattan.

As Holmes, Mary and I were fortunate to be in the first class we were let off of the boat soon after it docked and waived past the officials who must have assumed that we

were both healthy and possessing sufficient funds as not to be a burden to the taxpayers of America. The immigrant passengers would have to work their way through the bottle neck of the Castle building, as would many more immigrants until the new building on Ellis Island, still being completed in 1889, was opened to welcome them.

The Cunard staff were on the shore to meet us and directed us to a row of reserved taxis. We had carried our valises in our hands and were assured that our steamer trunks would appear within the hour at our hotel. The horse-drawn cab to which we were escorted was driven by a small wiry man who struck me as just a wee small piece above a leprechaun. "Seamus O'Malley at your service, guv'nors, and m'lady. Let me be takin' your bags there sirs. And my, are you just one long drink o' water," he said looking up at the tall figure of Sherlock Holmes. "Aye, but you my good man, you would be a wee bit more a go by the ground than your tall friend here. So where is it you're wantin' to be this fine mornin'?"

"The Gilsey," I replied. "I believe it may be found at Broadway and 29th Street."

"Why, and was it lost?" he said with a pleasant laugh. "At 29th it is my good sir. 'Tis there it is, and we shall find it there, as you say sir. So you just be holdin' on to your lady sir, and Seamus O'Malley will have you there with as full of dash-fire as I can be givin' ya."

"Perhaps you could tell us a little about yourself and your wonderful city, sir," said Mary. "This is our very first visit and we are all eyes and ears to learn."

Something told me that this might not have been the most useful request that would be made that day but Seamus O'Malley smiled and rose to the occasion. "I first come here from County Cork some ten years now, m'lady. When I first got off the boat I was as poor as Job's turkey and did a turn as a fart catcher for some old gunpowder. She treated me like a young saucebox, she did. But I knew, I did,

that if I kept that up I would end up off my chump as some old rusty guts and in my eternity box by the time I was forty. So I paid me dues every month, all regular I did, to the Tammany boys and so when it came up my turn for the cab license I got it. But me life here is good. No sense crabbin' it. Maybe it'll take me a month of Sundays to pay off the toffs but me young uns'll go to school and will have as fine a life as can be had here in America. No point to lettin' your tail down here in New York. It's as good place on earth as can be. Aye. 'Tis."

He kept up the banter for another fifteen blocks, most of which we could understand. The cabbie navigated his way through a frenzy of wagons, push carts, cabs, and pedestrians, all going hither and thither and shouting and bleeping their horns. It had all the activity of London on a holiday, but much less well-behaved.

On arrival at our hotel I was pleased to see that our client had selected a new and rather luxurious establishment. With over three hundred rooms it was large by English standards but only mid-range by American. The cabbie, the doorman and the colored men bearing red caps all helped with the valises. "That'll be one dollar guv'nor," said the cabbie. I withdrew an American dollar bill from my wallet and handed it to him.

"Thank you guv'nor, and welcome to America."

The red caps delivered our baggage to the room, which was, I had to admit new, luxurious and tastefully furnished.

Sherlock Holmes had said very little since getting off the boat. He simply kept gazing intently at everyone and everything we passed and making notes. Now he turned to Mary and I and said, "I am going to ask the front desk to bring me back copies of the papers from the week of the murder in Tarrytown, as well as any new police reports. Why don't you two stroll along "the sidewalks of New York" and enjoy it. We will have all too little time for leisure beginning tomorrow morning."

“Thank you, Holmes,” I said. “That is very thoughtful of you. I will also set a task to the front desk – to find us some theater tickets for this evening and you, my friend will have to join us. We will not hear of your not doing so.”

“Oh, very well. If you insist.”

We parted and my wife and I walked east along 29th Street until we reached the river. Then we followed the promenade south around the bend of the island until the magnificent Brooklyn Bridge came into view. Truly it was one of the seven wonders of the modern world. The two massive towers held up the great cables, which in turn held the suspended roadway. It was a miracle of modern engineering. We climbed the staircase up to the roadway and walked arm in arm clear across to Brooklyn and back. When we had completed one return traverse we smiled at each other and did one more. From the mid-point of the bridge we could see the Statue of Liberty off to the south and the skyscrapers, some as tall as sixteen stories, to the west and north. It was rather exhilarating.

In the City Hall Square we giggled together as we most unceremoniously ate food from a stove-bearing wagon, covered with advertisements and an umbrella. We had to confess that a Coney Island Hot Dog, slathered in mustard and assorted condiments, was delicious even if far from dainty.

By the time we returned to the hotel it was the hour for preparing for the theater. Sherlock Holmes joined us at the Garden Theater and we attended an enjoyable performance of the latest production of a play all about Beau Brummell. It starred a young chap named William Gillette and we agreed that he had a future ahead of him on stage. My dear wife begged off of any after-theater dining and sent Holmes and I out into the late evening hurly-burly of Manhattan. The doorman advised us, “Just a few blocks up the Great White Way, gentlemen, you’ll find the Haymarket, as fine and as friendly an eatery as there is for gentlemen in all New York.”

The after-theater patrons of the establishment were a fascinating mixture of beautiful young un-chaperoned women whose virtue I assumed had been compromised some time ago, and gentlemen of all ages who dined, and drank, and laughed among themselves and with the ladies. The food was as good, perhaps even better, as any I had eaten in a pub in England. Several single men sat by themselves at the bar, including a large policeman who had a glowing ruddy complexion. Shortly after we sat down a boisterous young man, Irish of course, climbed up on his chair, and then up onto the table and began to sing *Sweet Rosie O'Grady*. He was very loud and not at all on key. After a few minutes of this we saw the policeman rise, leave his shepherd's pie and ale on the bar counter, and walk towards the self-acclaimed opera star. With a long arm he grabbed the fellow from behind by his suspenders and with one strong tug dropped him back into his chair. His mates were all laughing, the policeman was laughing, and soon so was the budding young Caruso. "There's a good lad," said the policeman. "Now just be good or be gone and be leavin' the entertainment to those who get paid to provide it." He clapped a friendly hand on the lad's shoulder and then shuffled his way back to his place at the bar. The crowd gave a round of applause, which the singer mistook for his performance and rose and bowed.

The atmosphere continued in this manner and Holmes and I enjoyed two rounds of excellent ale and a generous steak and kidney pie each. We heard a bit of a ruckus at the door and saw three quite rough looking chaps enter the saloon and walk up to the bar. The level of the conversation dropped noticeably and the patrons were all watching the newcomers with one eye while acting nonchalant with the other.

Holmes and I looked on, quite fascinated by the drama unfolding, as the three of them all ordered a whiskey and, trying to look all manly, tossed it back. Then one of them

turned to the crowd and in a bellowing voice, with a strong Slavic accent, shouted "America is a country of whores! You simpering stupid Irish sheep ran away from whoring for the bloody English lords, and now you're whoring for the stinkin' Yankee capitalists! You're all just a bunch of whores!"

There was a moment of silence, after which the patrons ignored him and went back to their ales and conversations.

Holmes looked up at the young waiter and asked, "Is that considered permissible behavior in your establishment?"

"No sir, not really. But almost all of our patrons are Irish and have been called much worse than whores and they consider these anarchists more to be fugitives from the madhouse and not worth letting their stew get cold."

Seeing that his first performance had no effect the loud Slav tried again. "And that bleedin' bastard, your Pope Leo the Lecher can bloody well go and . . ." Here he demanded a self-inflicted sexual act that, as a medical professional, I can assure you is anatomically impossible.

"Oh oh," said the young waiter. "That went too far."

Several men in the room stood up and started to move towards the bar. The policeman again pushed back his dinner and walked towards them.

"Come on Mister Copper! Come show us what a piggish slave you are to your capitalist overlords!"

From a dark corner in the back of the dining area I saw a very tough looking fellow in a police captain's uniform make his way through the crowd. The man who had been sitting beside him, a lean ferret-like man, furtive, with a long face and beady eyes, also stood but remained by the table. As the captain passed some of the men who were preparing for a donnybrook he rudely and forcibly shoved them back into their chairs. "Sit down and stay down," he barked at them. Every one of them did as they were told.

"Those Serbians, or whoever they are, picked the wrong night to be in the Haymarket," said the young waiter with a barely disguised tone of eagerness. "That's the Clubber

hissself comin' up after them and Lieutenant Icky what's beside him."

In just a few seconds the burly policeman from the bar confronted the leader of the three ruffians. The wiry Slav hit him with his fist on the jaw. The policeman barely moved. He quickly raised his right hand and grabbed the Slav by the neck of his shirt and brought his face crashing down on the edge of the bar.

The captain had approached the other two bearing a nightstick in each hand. With lightning speed he landed the left against the head of the one, and with his right brought a stick up sharply between the legs of the other.

Within a few seconds all three were lying in crumpled heaps on the floor. The captain grabbed one by the scruff of the neck and the policeman the other two the same way. They were dragged across the floor, through the open door and deposited into the street. The two policemen returned to their dinners, to the quiet applause of the rest of the house.

"I must say," said Holmes. "The constabulary of New York City are doing their job very efficiently."

"And so they should be sir," said the young waiter. "The proprietor of this establishment pays them a fair monthly sum to make sure they do, sir."

Holmes looked quizzically at the young man. "Pardon me, but I had understood that your police force was paid out of the public purse, not employed privately. Is that not so?"

"Right you are, sir. Both in fact, sir. And we all know that a policeman is paid far too little to look after his wife and family in New York City, so it's understood that they have to earn their wage on the side, sir. That's the way it works sir."

"You must excuse me, young man," said Holmes, his eyes now lit up with that tell-tale sign of the investigative detective. "As we are only just arrived in New York City we are not familiar with the way things appear to work here. Would you be so kind as to enlighten a couple of strangers? If your other tables can spare you for a moment would you

care to join us for a last round, and maybe even something to eat? Why don't you fetch something from the kitchen, put it on our tab and join us?"

"Don't mind if I do sir," he said. "Give me just a moment and I will be right back."

The young lad soon returned bearing a platter with a thick liverwurst sandwich and a glass of a dark liquid that had small bubbles sparkling at the top of it. "I say, what is that drink you are having? Is it a very dark ale?"

"No sir. I needs my employment and I have to serve alcohol, but I have promised my mother that I would never touch a drop of it myself. This sir is the newest elixir that is sweeping America. It's has a great taste and not even a drop of rum in it."

"Are there not a score of these now being sold?" I asked. "What makes this one so successful?"

"Oh there are many bubbling tonics sir. But most of them are no better than cat piss. This here is Coca-Cola. It's the real thing, sir."

"Indeed, I must try some before we leave America."

"Now young man," Holmes began, "Pray bring us up to date on America. In England we expect the help to provide good service because that is their job. And we most assuredly expect it from our police constables and inspectors. But you are saying that your practice here is different."

"As I said sir, a man cannot feed and clothe his family in New York if he were to rely only on his wages. There's quite the handful of rough types here in what's called the Tenderloin District, but the police captain Alexander Wilson, the chap I called "'Clubber'", that bein' how he's known here and for good reason, he and his men make sure that the fine restaurants, and saloons like ours here, and even the houses of ill repute, are all kept safe, and so we show our gratitude by puttin' a little somethin' in their pockets."

"And what about your more serious criminals," asked Holmes. "The bank robbers, and swindlers and the truly nasty types. I am sure you have your fair share of them as well, do you not."

"For sure we do sir," replied the young man and then moved his head closer to Holmes and continued in hushed tones. "They do not last long in the Tenderloin, sir. First offence they might get off with a beatin' from Clubber and his boys, but if they persist, the word is that they get a visit from Lieutenant Icky."

"Yes," said Holmes, "and what does such a visit consist of?"

"Well sir, us workin' types don't really know so I'm just sayin' what I been told, but some of those who get visited just seems to disappear, and some we hear ran like scared cats as far as San Francisco, and some ends up floatin' in the East River, sir, if you know what I mean. The word is sir, if you values your life the last thing you want is a visit from Icky."

"Is that truly the man's name - Icky," asked Holmes.

"Oh no sir. His real name is Isaac Crane, but when he was a young lad growin' up here, accordin' to what I been told, his classmates started callin' him Ichabod, cause his last name was 'Crane'. You know, that fella in the story, Ichabod Crane? And it just became Icky, and that's what everyone now calls him. But not to his face, mind you. No sir, I do not recommend anyone ever do that, sir. And he gets a lot in his pocket every month from the Tammany boys, cause he looks after all the real dangerous types he does."

"And does this apply to every service the city provides?" continued Holmes.

"I cannot, for the life of me, think of one where it does not," the lad replied. "If your road needs repairin' then you have to pay for it. If not then it'll be a mess for years. Or they will just start and dig a big hole in front of your establishment and then leave it there for a donkey's age."

Same goes for the ambulance drivers, and the health inspectors, and now sir, with them puttin' in the electricity all over the south end of the island, that's especially one where you have to be prepared to pay, because everybody is wantin' it. Soon no theater, or restaurant or saloon will have any patrons if they don't have the electricity."

Holmes starred at the boy quietly for a moment. "Are you saying that everyone who does anything for you has to be given cash every time he shows up? That must get terribly awkward does it not?"

"Oh no sir. It's all arranged by the men at the Tammany Hall sir. You just pay your dues to them and they look after makin' sure that all those hard workin' policemen and public servants are looked after, sir. And they look after the poor, and any widows and orphans, they do sir. Here we just give the boys a glass of ale and a sandwich, but their financial support, sir, that's all provided to them by the union and the politicians what meets down on 14th Street sir.

"It's always been that way sir, here in New York City. I never lived anywheres else sir, so I wouldn't be knowin' but that's the way it's been here for near one hundred years."

Holmes continued the conversation as the young man devoured his sandwich. The lad was rewarded with another fine sandwich and thanked as we rose to return to the hotel.

"Can you imagine, Watson," Holmes said as we walked back to the Gilsey, "anyone offering to pay Inspector Lestrade a bribe just to show up and do his job."

"Never."

"Neither can I. But here in America it is not only the general practice, but accepted and even condoned by the general populace. Do you suppose there is much money in it?"

"Heavens, yes. There are already several million living in this city and if every business is expected to pay their dues then someone or some ones are getting very wealthy. If they also control the awarding of all the city contracts then I

suspect that they are taking a cut of those as well. I dare say, there must a very pretty penny to be made. Yes a very pretty penny."

3 SLEEPY HOLLOW

First thing the next morning, Holmes, my wife and I had the hotel livery service deliver us to Grand Central Depot on 42nd Street, where we caught the early morning train to Tarrytown. Behind the gleaming 4-6-0 Ten Wheeler steam engine of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad we chugged alongside Riverside Park and followed the river, stopping at Yonkers and Dobbs Ferry and finally at our destination. The client had arranged for us to stay at a hotel that was built by a wealthy if impractical American – mind you that is how Londoners describe most Americans – in the shape of a castle.

“Are we in Warwick-on-the-Hudson?” asked my wife when we approached the anomalous edifice.

Unlike real English castles that are drafty and gloomy, this one, built in the preceding decade was quite comfortable and outfitted as a luxurious if silly looking hotel.

“Our client will meet us here in an hour and take us to the family estate,” said Holmes. “Other than a spectacular view of the river, for which I have no earthly use, I see nothing to recommend this town to anyone’s enjoyment, so I will leave you two to enjoy the natural beauty whilst I review our documents one more time.”

To pass the hour Mary and I strolled along the main street of the town, which was quite appropriately named “Main Street.” To my surprise and wonder it felt as if we have landed on a different planet from the one we were in the day before in New York City. The men and women and families we met were gracious, polite, warm, and friendly. Their spoken English was highly articulate even if bearing a distinct American accent. When they heard us speaking the

Queen's English they concluded that we were visitors and extended a most hospitable welcome. One couple of about the same age as Mary and I insisted on treating us to a concoction brewed at the lunch counter in Fishman's Drug Store. "Our local soda jerk makes the very best Coke floats," she enthused. And I had to admit that there were rather refreshing and tasty.

They asked as to the purpose of our visit in Tarrytown and I guardedly informed them that I was a medical doctor and had been called upon to provide assistance to a family that had recently suffered a tragedy. The lady immediately responded, "Oh, you must mean the McCarthys. Well now if you ask me . . ." I refrained from the obvious rejoinder that I had not. "If you ask me, all of us in town know that there is some dark story behind Charles McCarthy and John Turner. They supposedly made their fortune in California but no one really knows how they did it. Not that they were not both fine upright men. But if anyone ever asks them direct about their past, they just clam up, they do. We're all feeling terrible for Mrs. McCarthy, we are, her having lost her husband and having her son in the mad house for killing his father. But if you ask me, there is something about those two families that's been hidden and that they would like to keep hidden. And the word is, doctor, that the past has come back to haunt them. I'm sure you know that some local folks still believe that parts of this town are haunted, they do. You just can't bury the past forever, no you can't. It will come back, and some of us are quite sure that's just what it has done. Poor Mrs. McCarthy."

At this point her husband interrupted, changed the subject and asked us about the weather in England, always an acceptably neutral topic and the basis for endless if meaningless conversation.

Our time had run out and we made our way back to the hotel. Sherlock Holmes was pacing up and down the cobblestones under the portico of the entrance.

“Ah yes. Dr. and Mrs. Watson. And did you learn anything of use about this pleasant little town?”

“We did Mr. Holmes,” began my wife. But Holmes raised his finger to his lips. “I do want to hear all about it but it will have to wait. I believe that coming up the drive behind you is the carriage that belongs to our client.”

We turned and saw an open four-wheeler approaching us. It was drawn by a pair of gleaming black horses, and behind them I could see that the brass fittings were all highly polished and shining in the summer sun. Our client’s wealth may have originated in the California gold rush but the taste was as refined as one would see in Mayfair. Seated in the front-facing seat was a lady of close to sixty years of age, dressed entirely in black. When the carriage stopped she rose and stepped out without waiting for the driver to assist her. She was short, not over five feet, and still quite spry and trim although her shoulders were slightly rounded, as is common to women as they reach that age. Her face puzzled me as it bore all the lines that one normally associates with a life of joy and laughter, yet it was haggard and drawn. Her recent tragedy had clearly been very hard for her to bear.

She approached the three of us and extended her hand. “Dr. and Mrs. Watson, and Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Welcome to Tarrytown. You are the only answer left to my prayers. I have exhausted all my other possibilities and your willingness to come all the way from London to help me is something for which I am very deeply grateful. You appear to be ready to travel so may I ask that you join me in my carriage and return to McCarthy Manor. I would be much more comfortable speaking with you in the familiar surroundings of my home than in the parlor of a hotel. These past few weeks have been the worst weeks of my life so please indulge the request of a weary woman and come with me.”

“By all means,” said Holmes warmly as he reached out and held her hand. “We will be honored to visit your home and while we are only human and cannot promise miracles,

be assured that we will do everything within our power to help resolve the dreadful situation in which you have found yourself. Would it be acceptable to you if we started in straightaway and asked you a few questions as we are driven there?"

"I'm sorry, sir," she replied, her voice sounding tired. "But no, please do not ask me any questions. I have been blessed with wonderful staff and I have great confidence in my driver, George," she said and gestured with her head towards the driver. "But this tragedy has been very upsetting to the help. There are rumors and stories abounding and I would prefer not to give rise to any more of them. Your visit alone will be more than enough to start tongues wagging. But we can converse pleasantly about the village and scenery."

"Of course, madam," said Holmes. "That is a wise suggestion. A pleasant conversation about scenery is always welcome."

Sherlock Holmes had no use for pleasant conversations about scenery, but ever gracious to widows in distress he endured the ride to the Manor.

We took the road north out of the village and descended into a lovely glade at the bottom of which was a steep ravine and a shaded stream.

"The bridge you are about to cross," said Mrs. McCarthy, "is the very one made infamous by our famous local author, Mr. Washington Irving. It is the one said to be haunted by the Headless Horseman on his galloping stallion. I have lived here now for over thirty years and have yet to meet the poor chap. If you happen to run into him do give him my greetings," she added with a forced smile.

"Indeed we shall, madam," replied Holmes.

The ride to the Manor was mercifully short. We approached a large white frame house with a front porch extending the entire length. It was a widespread, comfortable looking building. In the steep roof above the

porch were a series of gables, and on the far end a conservatory with large glass windows on three sides. Behind the house I could see two barns and several out buildings. Spreading elm trees framed the home and there was a small orchard on north side. It presented a gracious and welcoming prospect, and so out-of-keeping with the tragedy that had recently befallen it.

"Welcome to McCarthy Manor," said our client. "Please make yourselves comfortable in the parlor and I will join you shortly."

We seated ourselves in a spacious and sunny front room that was furnished with several sofas and occasional chairs, all upholstered in yellow or light green fabric, giving the room a country atmosphere. A young negro boy of about ten years of age appeared bearing a tray with tea and some baked goods. He set the tray down on the low table in front of the couch, gave us a gleaming smile, nodded and said, "Help yourselves." He turned and left the room.

Mrs. McCarthy returned to us and said, "Oh, very good. I see our young Wesley has looked after you. His family has helped us look after the house and farm for many years and have been invaluable, especially after our oldest son was taken from us and young James went off to college. I have told his sister, Patience, to stay close by as I assume that you will want to speak to her regarding the events of that night. But do not let me waste your time. Where do you wish to begin your investigation, Mr. Holmes?"

"I understand that the murder took place in your husband's office. If that is correct could you please show us that room, and then I would ask you to tell me, exactly, difficult as I am sure it will be for you, what you recollect from that most unfortunate night."

"Come please. This is the room, Mr. Holmes, and that is my husband's desk. That is where we found him."

"You say 'we' madam, who may I ask discovered your husband's body," queried Holmes.

“My son, James, was the first to enter the room. He was followed momentarily by our colored girl, Patience Moran, she was the only member of the help who were staying in the house that night. I came down a minute or two afterwards.”

“And what did you see when you entered? Please try to be as precise but as complete as possible.”

She closed her eyes and I could see her clasping her hands tightly together. “I saw my husband slumped forward at his desk. My son, James, was leaning over him, clutching at his shoulders. He was shouting ‘Father, Father, don’t die father. Don’t let those bastards win Father.’ He was distraught and in a panic. He looked up as he saw me enter, and with a desperate look on his face said, and I believe these were his exact words, I am not likely to forget them, ‘Oh Mother, I am so sorry. I’m so sorry. They killed him and it is all my fault. Oh mother, I am so sorry.’ He said no more and collapsed onto the desk sobbing and crying. I came over to my husband’s body and saw the great pool of blood that had flowed from his head. My son raised himself up from the desk and we grabbed hold of each other. Both of us were in complete distress. We held on to each other tightly for several minutes. Then he turned to Patience and asked her to run into the village and fetch both the doctor and the constable. She did so and the three of them arrived within the half hour. I believe that any other matters after that time were included in the police reports that I had sent to you.”

“Indeed they were, madam, and I do understand how very difficult this must be for you to have to go through it all again,” said Holmes as he extended both of his hands and laid them on top of Mrs. McCarthy’s. “Please bear with me and help me with just a few more details. What time did these events take place?”

“I think it was just after one o’clock in the morning. I remember looking at the clock as we waited for the doctor

and constable. It was about twenty minutes before two then."

"Ah yes," said Holmes. "Your husband was still up and working. Was that his common practice?"

"It had been off and on over the years. He would often read and finish up his paper work after I had gone to bed for the night. During the previous week, after James had returned from college, he and his son would sit in his office and talk until quite late. Father and son, I assumed, had much to catch up on."

"And did you know what all they conversed about? Did either your husband or your son relate to you any of the details?"

"No," she shook her head. "Once or twice I heard him raise his voice and I thought that yet again they were arguing about my son's course of studies. I thought they had put that all behind them but perhaps not, since there was no other topic about which they ever argued. Over the past two years there had grown a rather strong bond between them."

"You say they had argued about his studies. What was there to argue about? Your son had been accepted at Harvard had he not? I assume that he was a diligent student."

"Oh yes, oh yes. James is a brilliant boy, for sure. But his father had his heart set on having him go to West Point. It is hardly more than a stone's throw from here and we could have seen him on weekends. I suspect that Charles, my husband that is, was hoping that he would follow in his older brother's footsteps and distinguish himself in a military career."

"You say his older brother. Earlier you said that he had been lost to you. Please tell me what happened."

She took a deep breath. "Charles Junior was our first born. He was an outstanding student and athlete. He won a full scholarship to the Naval Academy in Annapolis and we were very proud of him. He was on board his first ship when it was

sent overseas to give some Brazilians a bit of a lesson. The marines gave them what for, but a sniper took aim at my son's boat, the *USS Detroit*, and cut him down. He was buried at sea and the Navy sent us the citation signed by his admiral." She pointed to a spot above the fireplace and I observed a photograph of a handsome young man in his white dress uniform. Beside it was a framed citation, embossed with a gold seal.

"His father took it very hard, as did I, but Charles, my husband, then tried to steer young James to be just like his brother, and of course he wasn't. He had the grades and all the recommendations he needed for West Point but a military life held no interest for him. He was in love with the arts, and with the theater, and wanted nothing more in life than to be able to write plays, and act. I confess that I have myself to blame for that. I often took him and Alice, Mr. Turner's daughter, to see the wonderful productions in New York. And last summer he and his father had some very long arguments about it. One morning after they had been at it hammer and tong the night before, I said to my husband, I said 'Dearest, your son James cannot replace your son Charles. Our oldest son is gone and all we can do is to be thankful to the Lord for the time we had with him and for our wonderful memories. We cannot force James to be someone he is not.' He said nothing but later that day he gave me a warm embrace and said, 'You're right, darling. I have to love and support James as James, and not as Charles.' And that was the end of it. There was no more talk about West Point. My husband took an eager interest in all that James was learning at Harvard, and in the joyful silliness of the Hasty Pudding Theatricals that James and Alice and their friends were involved in. He even offered to be the financial backer and help produce a jolly little farce the group students had written. The two of them would be up late at night talking about it. They couldn't wait for the arrival of James's friends so they could finish their script and start their rehearsals.

"I'm not sure what else I can tell you about father and son. What else do you need to know?"

"Perhaps some additional details will be required later," said Holmes, "but for now let us return to this office, and what else you observed at the time of the murder."

"What else is there to say?"

"The gun that was used to kill your husband; where was it when you entered?"

"It was beside him on the desk."

"How did it get there?"

"I do not know for sure. Patience, the colored girl, said that James had had it in his hand when he was standing at the window and shouting, but I did not see that, so I cannot say,"

"What was your son wearing?" asked Holmes.

"His evening clothes. He had removed his jacket after dinner and put on a sweater, but otherwise there was nothing different about his dress."

"You are telling me," said Holmes, "that he had not yet changed into his bed clothes at one o'clock in the morning?"

"He and his father were both night owls. If they were not sitting up and chatting then they would both burn the midnight oil either writing or reading until past one o'clock. It was not unusual for either of them to still be up at that hour."

"Hmm . . . and what of this Miss Moran, the colored girl you have spoken about. She arrived in the library before you but after your son. Is that correct?"

"That is what I understand. She has confirmed that to me. However I cannot confirm it with James. He has not said an intelligible word to me since the following morning when his madness overtook him."

"Ah yes, his madness. Let us return to that in a few moments, but for now a little more about the girl. Was she fully dressed as well or in her night clothes?"

"She was fully dressed."

“Why would a young girl who provides domestic services be fully dressed so late at night?”

“She is quite the little student. After her chores were done in the kitchen and in the bedrooms for the evening she would often be up late working on her assignments for school. She is a diligent one she is. The girl has it in her head that she is going to go to college. She has her nose in a book constantly. As I said, she is quite the little student.”

“I would hope to speak to her presently, but first back to your son. What indication did he give to you of his madness?”

“None.”

“None? I’m afraid I do not understand, Mrs. McCarthy. How could he have given you no indication of his madness? He was bundled off to the Mattewan prison having been declared insane by the doctor and police detective, was he not?”

“I cannot help you there, Mr. Holmes. I did not have an opportunity to speak confidentially to my son after our brief time at the body of his father. As I am sure you can understand I could not return to sleep after all the dealings with the doctor and the police, as I was sore distressed. I took a little laudanum with my tea to help me fall asleep, and fell into a very deep sleep that I did not wake from until late the next morning. I asked the help why they had let me sleep so long and they said, understandably, that they felt I needed the sleep in order to regain my strength and face the inevitable events of the day.

“By the time I had awakened and made myself ready, I descended from my room to find that the police detective had arrived from Yonkers, had completed his inspection except for his interview of me, that the doctor had arranged for the mortician to come and remove my husband’s body, and that my son had gone stark raving mad, had been put into a straight jacket and taken off to the mad house. I have

not spoken to him since. You have read the reports, Mr. Holmes. Now you know as much as I do."

"Perhaps one or two more items, Mrs. McCarthy, if I may," Holmes responded. "About this prayer meeting that was held the following morning. I gather you were still in your bed when this occurred."

"I was. I only know about it from what I was told."

"And what were you told about it? Who were you told participated in it?"

"I was told sir that it was held in the conservatory. It was arranged almost immediately after the arrival of our neighbors, Mr. Turner and his daughter Alice, and son James's friends, the college boys who had come to visit."

"And was your family in the habit of holding impromptu prayer meetings?"

"Mr. Holmes, sir, we are Presbyterians. We are not evangelical enthusiasts. We say our prayers before dinner and before going to sleep at night. We do not hold prayer meetings in a conservatory on weekday mornings. No sir."

"Yes. As I thought. These friends of your son; did you meet them?"

"Only briefly. They greeted me in the early afternoon and extended their condolences in a very kind manner. They offered to do whatever they could to help James recover, and then they departed. That was understandable since their holiday visit could not continue."

"And did they depart immediately for the train station after that?"

"It was my understanding that they went to the home of my neighbors, John Turner and his daughter. I have no idea what they did after that."

At this point I took the liberty of posing a few questions myself.

"About your son's going mad, Mrs. McCarthy. Do you remember ever seeing signs, any behavior in the past that

would indicate that he was susceptible to a mental condition?"

"Ah yes," added Holmes. "Thank you, doctor."

"No doctor. None at all," replied the lady.

"No seizures, no extended periods of melancholy, no bursts of either temper or unaccountable sobbing?"

"No, doctor. He was a consistently happy child. He had a flair for being dramatic perhaps, but he was always cheerful and good-natured. Always laughing and smiling. As a child growing up he often had the rest of the family and the help in stitches. So no sir, there was never any sign of madness. None whatsoever."

"We understand," said Holmes. "And we can assure you that we will do whatever we can to restore your son to you. I know that these questions have been very trying for you and I do believe that we have asked all we need to for the time being." He rose as if prepared to depart.

The lady looked up at him and said, "I cannot tell if my answers have been of any use to you, Mr. Holmes. I told the police much the same and they have done nothing. I can only say again what I have told you from the outset - I know in my heart that my son is not mad and that he did not kill his father."

"Madam," said Holmes, "it is much too early for me to form any type of conclusions and I would at all other times refrain from saying anything, but I believe that you are right, and I am determined to find out the truth concerning what took place."

"Oh, thank you sir. That is the first scrap of good news I have heard in the past several weeks. Thank you."

4 PATIENCE

"Before we depart," replied Holmes, "might we have a short word with the young colored girl who is on your staff? I believe you said that she was also in the room with you that evening."

"You mean Patience? Yes of course. If you will excuse me I will send for her at once. Please remain in the parlor. She will come to you."

"A most curious case, Watson, most curious." said Holmes when we were alone. "A convivial young man with no apparent animosity toward his father goes mad and kills him. Friends arrive and hold a prayer meeting. The lad is carted off to the insane asylum, the police believe all of it, and the mother believes none of it. There is something here Watson. As yet I cannot put my finger on it but I sense that we are merely seeing the surface of something that is much deeper."

"I am sure you are right, Holmes. This madness story makes no sense at all. Ah, the young girl from the staff is coming."

We rose from our chairs as Mrs. McCarthy returned. Behind her was not the child we had expected but a tall, strapping young negress whose age I estimated to be about seventeen years. She was as tall as I and had an athletic body.

"Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson," said Mrs. McCarthy. "This is Patience Moran. I have told her to be entirely free and open in her answers to your questions. I will leave you alone with her so as not to impede your interrogation. Good day gentlemen, and thank you for bringing a ray of hope into my

life. Thank you." With this she departed, closing the doors to the parlor behind her.

"Good morning, Miss Moran," began Holmes with a smile towards the young woman. "I confess that we had expected more of a child and less of a young woman."

"It is no matter," replied the young woman with a tone of quiet confidence. "My family has helped the McCarthy's manage the farm and the house since before I was born. I have helped with the household duties since I was six years old. Mrs. McCarthy still thinks of me as a child."

"Please, my dear," I said. "Do be seated. It is quite obvious that you are no longer a child and have grown into a fine young lady."

"Thank you doctor," she replied, and then with a hint of a smile added, "and thank you for not asking me if I just grewed."

We smiled back at her. Holmes sat up in his chair opposite her and looked directly at her. "Miss Moran," he began, "Could you tell us a little about your schooling. I am told that you are quite the student."

"If you are trying to ascertain that I am not just a simple pickaninny, I can assure you that I am not. I will graduate from our town's high school in two weeks."

"And in the fall, miss?" I interjected.

"I have a scholarship to attend Bennett College, doctor."

"Yes, indeed, well done. It is a rather famous college for negro girls, is it not? Are you familiar with it Holmes?"

"No Watson, I regret that I am not. I assume that you will study household management or some similar course and return here to assist your family in the management of McCarthy Manor," said Holmes.

For an instant I detected a flash of impatience in the eyes of Miss Patience, but her reply did not betray her feelings. "No sir. I have been accepted to study law."

"Ah, very good," said Holmes. "And so when you return to Tarrytown you will join a local firm, or perhaps someday even

set up your own, and help all these folks with those matters of property, and estates, and taxes that beset the good people of rural America. Very good indeed."

Yet again a flash of impatience. "No sir. I will work in New York City. I will depart this village on the fifteenth of August and by that date I will have lived here for seventeen years, three months, and six days. I have no intention of returning."

"And what will you do in New York City?" he asked, having learned that it was unwise to visit any further presumptions upon this young woman.

"I am hoping, sir, to serve as a clerk for one of our Assembly Men. There is a man that my friends and teachers all admire, and I want to help serve in his office. We expect that he will become the Governor of the State of New York within a few years."

I smiled at her but did not wish to betray any doubting of her youthful hopes. "And what is this young legislator's name, miss. I have no doubt we will be hearing about him."

"You will sir. His name is Roosevelt. He is a good man sir. And fearless, sir. We respect him."

"And so you should, young lady," said Holmes. "And now let us return to that event a few weeks ago. I am told that on that dreadful night you were the second person to enter Mr. McCarthy's office. Is that correct?"

"Yes sir, Master James had arrived before I did."

"And can you recall for me, exactly, what it was that you saw and what happened after you entered?"

"Yes sir. When I entered he was standing at the window looking out and shouting sir. And waving the revolver, sir."

"Shouting, you say. And what was he shouting. Please try to remember, factually of course, what you heard."

"He was shouting 'You bastard, you cowardly bastard' along with some other oaths, sir."

"Did you see who he was shouting at? Did you look out of the window?"

"I did sir. It was very dark but there was a little light from the lamp at the coach house. I saw one man, dressed in dark clothes, but I could not see any of his features, sir. I also heard him shout back at Master James."

"You are sure of that, miss? Please, it is important that you tell me only what you are absolutely sure of. What did you hear this darkly dressed man shout to young Mr. McCarthy?"

"I am very sure of it sir or I would not have said it. He shouted back 'You're next kid!' and then he ran off towards the woods in the direction of Sleepy Hollow."

"And then what happened?" asked the persistent detective.

"Master James was waiving the revolver around wildly and I said 'Jimmy, put the gun down. Put it down.'"

"And did he?"

"No he tried to fire it but he did not have it cocked properly and so nothing happened. And I told him again to put it down. He was highly distraught and I feared that he would do something foolish."

"And so what did you do, miss?"

"I took the gun away from him and put it over on the table."

"The gun, yes," said Holmes. "Young Mr. McCarthy said that in his confession that he had come across it lying on his father's desk. Was Mr. McCarthy Senior in the habit of working with a loaded gun beside him?"

"No sir. Never."

"Had you seen that gun in this house before last night, miss?"

"No sir. I have been helping to clean this house almost every day for the past ten years. There are several rifles and a brace of pistols kept in a locked cabinet, but that gun was not one of them. I have never seen it before."

"You say you took the gun away from Master James. And just how did you manage to do that, miss?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I am bigger and stronger than he is. I just grabbed his wrist with my left hand and twisted the gun out of his hand with my right. It was not difficult. At that point he went to his father's body at the desk and fell on top of it and began to sob. His mother entered the room then and joined him. I did nothing until they told me to run into town to fetch the doctor and the constable."

"Ah yes. You were the one that was sent. I see," said Holmes. "But was that not a rather frightening thing to do? To run into town all by yourself at night?"

"No sir. I am a strong runner."

"No, no. I mean so late at night. The woods can be quite frightening in the dark and I believe these ones are even said to be haunted. It must have been very trying for you?"

Here the look Miss Patience gave Holmes went beyond impatience and I daresay I detected a momentary flash of anger. Yet when she spoke her voice was calm.

"I have walked into the village for school every weekday since I was six years old and have returned many times well after dark. I have yet to see a headless horseman or even hear him galloping. If you should happen to, sir, please give him my regards."

"Indeed I shall," said Holmes, who was clearly warming to this very composed young woman. "But miss, even if there were no headless horsemen, you did say that you saw an unknown man running in that direction. Were you not frightened that he might be lurking there and that you might be in danger?"

"No sir. I have already told you that I am a very good runner and that I know the paths and the road well. I knew I could outrun anyone I might meet. And I had already heard that man say that his next target would be Master James, sir, not me. And sir, if you know anything about criminals, they are not in the habit of waiting around at the scene of their

crime until the police arrive. I was quite sure he would be long gone, sir."

"Yes miss, your conclusions were all very logical. So then you called the doctor and the constable and returned to the house?"

"Yes sir. The constable was on duty at the police station, and the doctor keeps a horse and driver ready at all hours in case he is called upon to deliver a baby. We returned to the house within thirty minutes at which time the constable and the doctor took over and went about their business. I then took it upon myself to walk over to Turner Terrace and inform them of what had happened. The two families were very close and I felt that the Turners should be told as soon as possible. So I knocked on their door until Miss Alice came and I told her what had happened."

"You woke up both of them?" asked Holmes.

"I don't know about that sir. Miss Alice appeared in her night clothes but Mr. Turner did not come to the door. "

"Please describe her reaction to the news you brought, again as exactly as you can remember."

"Miss Alice was extremely distraught. Her mother was Irish and it was known that she inherited an Irish temperament and they weep and wail over the least little thing. So she cried loudly and threw herself against the door frame to hold herself up."

"And after her episode of grief, what then?"

"Miss Alice got dressed and she returned with me to the McCarthy's house, sir. But she did not stay long. Mrs. McCarthy had gone back to her room. The doctor had covered the body, and the constable was simply standing guard. She spoke to young James and they embraced each other, and held each other for some time and then she returned to her house. I went to my room after that sir, and had no more role in the events of the night."

"And the old man, Mr. Turner, did he not appear?"

"No sir. I never saw him that night. But he is not well sir and most likely Miss Alice did not wish to disturb him. That is all I know sir."

"You carried out the roles you were given with considerable bravery, young lady," I said to her, fearing that Holmes would neglect to complement her actions.

"Thank you doctor."

"Ah, but Miss Moran," said Holmes, "please do not think that I am doubting your word, but your version of the events does differ in one or two important details from the police report. There was no mention in them of James McCarthy's being at a window, or shouting, or of hearing a voice in return, or of seeing a dark figure as he fled. How, miss, do you account for those differences? Did you not give your full testimony to the police detective?"

"Yes sir, I did."

"Then why is your version not in their reports?"

"You will have to ask them that question sir. I suspect however that it has something to do with accepting the confession of a young gentleman instead of a member of a race and of an age they believe to be susceptible to superstitions and exaggerations, sir."

"You are very likely entirely correct, miss," said Holmes. "I fear that it may be quite some time before our police are relieved of their foolish prejudices. I, on the other hand, have no reason at all to doubt your truthfulness and accuracy. You have been most helpful."

"Thank you sir. May I go now?"

"Yes miss."

"Well now, Watson," he turned to me after the young woman had departed from the room, "I discipline my mind against coming to hasty conclusions before I have all the data at hand, but I confess, Miss Moran was rather convincing, was she not?"

"Yes Holmes. Quite the sensible young woman. Her story had an unmistakable ring of truth."

5 ALICE AND HER FATHER

Having concluded his interview with Miss Patience, Sherlock Holmes spent close to an hour walking about the grounds of the McCarthy Manor. As several weeks had passed since the murder there were no clues left to be seen, but still he was intent on becoming as familiar as possible with the entrances and exits, the doors and windows, and the surrounding lawns, gardens and forests. As I watched him I could tell that he was re-enacting the events in his fertile mind.

"If the murderer was someone other than young James, and if he was seen from the window by both James and Patience, then it appears he must have escaped through the window, and it is quite large enough for him to have done so easily. You would agree, Watson?"

"That seems correct," I said.

"If Patience is correct, and I am inclined to believe that she is, and the assailant was seen in the dim light from the coach house, then it would place him on this path." He pointed to a well-worn path that provided a shortcut from the back of the house and led diagonally across the fields, joining up with the road as it entered Sleepy Hollow.

"It is a footpath. I assume that it is the path taken daily by Patience as she walks from the house towards the school and the village. It is not wide enough or sufficiently worn to have been used by animals yet there are a few faint signs of the tracks of a horse, but they are too old to discern anything of significance. If the murderer was observed close to this path then we have to assume that he used it as his route of escape back to the village, but we also have to assume that he knew about it in advance."

“Which would mean,” I said, “that he must have had a close knowledge of the property. You cannot see this path from the road. Are you saying that he was likely a member of the household, or at least a familiar neighbor?”

“Possibly, but not necessarily,” replied Holmes. “He could also have been a cool and calculating killer who took the time to become familiar with the property and learn his escape route. If that is the case then we are dealing not with a crime of passion but with one of planned and carefully implemented execution. However, I am done for now with my looking over the property. We have an appointment with the neighbors, Mr. Turner and his daughter. Neither was in the house when the murder took place but both were involved in the events of the following morning. They have agreed to speak to us, so let us be on our way.”

Mrs. McCarthy had arranged for George, her driver, to take us to the next farm to the north, a large estate known as Turner Terrace. The manor house was even larger than the McCarthy’s and made of fieldstone and brickwork. It was a good thirty yards long with a full front porch, and like the McCarthy Manor, a conservatory on the south end. Working in the gardens were two men, rather well-dressed for groundskeepers. While the gardens looked acceptably maintained they were not what I would have called carefully manicured.

The barns looked prosperous, and there were at least twenty well-groomed and sleek horses in the front paddock. Behind them, in a smaller enclosure, we could see an enormous black horse by itself. I assumed it must be the stallion and that he ruled over the brood of mares adjacent to him. Mary also took notice.

“That big black fellow must be at least eighteen hands tall,” she said. “What a magnificent looking beast.”

A maid met us at the door and went to notify Mr. Turner. A minute later a tall older gentleman entered, impeccably

dressed, but walking with considerable difficulty and leaning heavily on a cane.

"Welcome, gentleman and lady," he said with a still strong Scottish accent. "I am John Turner. We understand you folks have come all the way from England to look into this tragedy for Florence McCarthy. We admire and respect your taking the time to do that. Anything you can do to help her get over what took place is a blessing to all of us."

His face had a practiced warmth to it. It was a broad face, as one might see in the highlands of Scotland, framed by hair and sideburns that once were no doubt a rich red but had now faded into a sandy reddish brown. He did not extend his hand in the way that most Americans do habitually but maintained a formal distance.

Mary warmed up the cool atmosphere by smiling at the older man. "Mr. Turner, I cannot claim to be a polished horsewoman but I know a fine herd of horses when I see them and yours, sir, are wonderful."

He smiled in return, obviously pleased with her observation and guileless compliment.

"It would appear, sir," added Holmes. "That in spite of your lame left leg you continue to enjoy riding and did so earlier this morning."

He looked warily at the detective but did not acknowledge the observation. He turned to Mary and replied, "Thank you miss. My little herd is one of the few joys left to me at my age. I would be delighted to talk about them but since you came to discuss other matters I will refrain. I understand that you want to talk to both my daughter Alice and to me, and I will let her go first. I'll be back in my office and you can have the maid fetch me when you done with Alice. I won't sit in on her meeting with you. I would not want you to think my presence inhibited any of her responses.

"Alice!" he shouted up the main stairway. "These detectives from England are here! Are you coming?"

"Yes father, coming!" we heard a young woman's voice from within one of the upstairs bedrooms. "Just finishing a letter. Be right there."

"She's always writing something," said the dour gentleman. He had hardly finished speaking when down the stairs there rushed one of the most lovely young women that I have ever seen in my life. Her violet eyes shining, her lips parted, a pink flush upon her cheeks, all thought of her natural reserve lost in her overpowering excitement and concern.

"Oh, Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" she cried, glancing from one to the other of us, and finally, with a woman's quick intuition, fastening upon my companion, "I am so glad that you have come. This has been a most terrible few weeks for us. We do so hope that you will be able to do a far more thorough investigation than our local police, and help dear Mrs. McCarthy to accept what has happened, awful though it has been for her."

"Alice," interjected her father. "I have told these men that you should speak to them alone. I do not wish to influence anything you say. You must be able to speak freely."

"Oh no, father," she cried, putting her hand on her chest. "I would feel so much better if you were with me."

"No Alice," he responded firmly. "That is my decision. I will be working in my office. Gentlemen, and Mrs. Watson, please," he said as he gestured towards the parlor. Before he turned to limp towards the back of the house I detected a quick look between father and daughter, one that I could only describe as of familial understanding. I wondered if Holmes had seen it as well but his face remained like a sphinx. It was always impossible to know what wheels were turning in that most unique of minds.

We entered the parlor and Mary and I sat on the sofa that was set at right angles to the fireplace. The lovely young woman sat in a chair facing the hearth, leaving Holmes to sit in the chair opposite Mary and me. Holmes surprised me by

lifting up the armchair and placing directly in front of the young woman so that he was looking square into her face. She exhibited a quick look of apprehension but recovered immediately into a polite smile that she directed, perhaps a little too disarmingly, towards Holmes.

“Miss Turner.”

“Oh please sir. Just call me Alice,” she interrupted with a coy smile. “That’s my name and what all my friends and professors call me, and I much prefer it to ‘Miss Turner.’”

“Very well then, Miss Alice,” continued Holmes. “Could you tell us a little about the connection between your family and the McCarthy’s? You appear to have been exceptionally close for many years. No doubt your entire life.”

“Of course, sir. We have been neighbors since before I was born, and I suppose we have been as close as neighbors often are. They had their lives. We had ours. There were a few disputes over the years but yes, I guess you could say that most of the time we were good neighbors to each other, yes.”

“Disputes?” queried Holmes. “What sort of things could two fine Scots Presbyterian families find to dispute about?”

“Oh sir,” she responded with a small laugh, “we have all been good church-going Christians, never missed a Sunday, but doesn’t mean that we were all love-your-neighbor to each other all the time. Both my father and Unc . . . Mr. McCarthy are, as you know, stubborn Scotsmen. And from time to time they would argue over something, usually to do with the sharing of pasture land, but of course they always managed to resolve their differences, or at least that was what it seemed to me. Mind you, I was my mother and father’s precious little girl, so I think there may have been one or two things that they kept hidden from me, as all parents do, do they not?”

Holmes ignored the question. “And do you have a suspicion of what those things might have been? Please, Miss Alice, try to be completely frank with us.”

She raised her hand to her mouth and looked towards the door of the parlor. In *sotto voce* she whispered, "Sir, I have no proof at all, and if I reveal my suspicions, I must ask you to promise me that you will not say a word of this to my father. It would bring enmity between us and he is so dependent on me since the death of my mother."

"You will have our complete confidence," assured Holmes.

"Sir," she said, looking steadfastly at the floor, "this is embarrassing for me but you have asked and my father has said that I must speak freely, and so I will. I have always had the feeling that the relationship between my mother and Mr. McCarthy was more than just being friendly neighbors."

"Are you telling me that there was an unacceptable liaison between them," asked Holmes bluntly. This seemed to me to be a highly inappropriate and unseemly issue to put to a young lady, but I confess that I was intrigued by the direction the conversation had taken, and so said nothing.

Miss Alice looked away and then again at the floor. She raised her head slowly and looked at my wife, Mary, instead of at Holmes. "I would rather die myself than say anything that would impugn the honor of my loving mother. And I have no way of knowing if anything carnal ever happened between them, but we all, I mean the children and all the help, could see that there were strong feelings for each other, and that is all I can say Mr. Holmes. Please do not ask me to say more." She resumed her intense look at the floor.

"Very well. Let us move on to the McCarthy family, your neighbors," said Holmes with a subtle sarcasm as he pronounced *neighbors*. "Did James and his father get along well? As they were your neighbors, I am sure you observed how they acted towards each other. What of that?"

Again she looked at the floor, then raised her head and said, "No sir. They did not get on well at all. I assume you have learned about the McCarthys' older son, Charles Junior. James's father wished, indeed he demanded that James enter the military just as his brother had done. James

refused. It caused a terrible row between them. They would not speak to each other. Mr. McCarthy was furious with James for refusing, as he said, to honor and respect the life of his older brother, and James was not only angry with his father's bullying him, but he blamed his father for his brother's death. Like most younger siblings he idolized his older brother. He believed that his brother would have lived had his father not bullied him to join the navy. The feelings between father and son were very hard indeed, sir."

"Are you in love with James?"

"Sir!" the young woman said with righteous indignation. I was about to rebuke Holmes as well when I felt a distinct elbow in my ribs from my wife.

"It would be perfectly normal if you were," continued Holmes, "and nothing to be ashamed about. You are both handsome and accomplished young people who have spent many hours of your life together. I would be surprised if you did not have strong feelings towards him."

"We do have strong feelings, sir," she responded with not a little hint of annoyance, "but it as if we were brother and sister. Never let yourself doubt upon that point, sir. We have known each other since we were little children, and I know his character as no one else does. I certainly care for him but I do so as a sister, and he has cared for me as a brother. We have never been romantically attracted to each other and I do not expect we ever will be. He has had many young woman admirers while he was at Harvard, just as I had many gentlemen callers while I was at Radcliffe."

"If you say so, miss," said Holmes. "Now pray will you tell me what you know of the murder and of the madness of James McCarthy?"

Alice Turner started to speak, stopped and buried her head in her hands. When she raised her body back up her face was contorted with pain. A moment later copious tears began to flow from her eyes. They streamed down her face and fell upon the bodice of her dress. Drops of mucous

dribbled from her nose. I jumped up from my seat and offered her my handkerchief.

"Thank you sir. Thank you," she said in a trembling voice. She dabbed her eyes and wiped her nose, took a deep breath and began to speak. "I am sorry gentlemen. It has been a very difficult time for all of us. But as you wish, I will tell you what I know. Word came to us in the early hours of the morning. The servant girl came and informed us. I made a visit to the McCarthy's home but there was nothing I could do and so returned to this house. I waited until my father woke up and then informed him of the terrible event.

"It also happened that on that morning two of our mutual friends, or I should say two of James's friends from Harvard, young men I knew to some degree through him, arrived that morning on the train and came first to visit me to say hello before going on. I do not wish to seem vain sir but one of them, Bruce, seemed to fancy me a little. I had the terrible task of telling them the news about Mr. McCarthy. Fortunately my father was with me and helped me through the ordeal. The four of us immediately made our way to the McCarthy's home as we were deeply concerned for James." Her she stopped and again dabbed her eyes.

"And when you reached the McCarthy home what happened then?" asked Holmes.

"Mrs. McCarthy was still in her bed, we were told, but James had not slept. We were shown into the office where the murder had taken place. James was sitting at his father's desk. I assume he was in shock. When he saw us he came quickly to us and embraced my father. After a few minutes of giving condolences my father suggested that a time of prayer together would be the best thing for us to do. He is a very deeply religious and devout man and we agreed. We excused ourselves and met in the conservatory.

"We prayed and each of us, father, Bruce, James, Cameron, that was the other friend who had come to visit, each took a turn and said a prayer."

“And what, may I ask, did you pray for,” asked Holmes. “I am not familiar with any section of The Book of Common Prayer that is dedicated to a service held at the time of a murder.”

“We are not Episcopalians sir. Our family and the McCarthys are Presbyterians, but Bruce and Cameron were members of a spiritualist group of sorts on the campus and such a meeting was quite familiar to them. We prayed for strength and wisdom, especially for James and his mother, and for justice, and that God would give divine guidance to the police to bring the villain into the hands of the courts.”

“Indeed,” said Holmes, and then with a faintly discernible twinkle in his eye looked over at me. “My dear Watson, could you make a note of the tactic of invoking divine intervention as an innovative method for tracking down criminals? It might be useful someday in the East End.

“And when your prayers were concluded, miss, what happened then?” said Holmes, returning his gaze to the young woman.

Her face showed contortions of emotion distress. She began to speak in a halting and trembling voice. “For a few moments nothing was said. Then James began to speak slowly and he said, ‘I killed my father.’” With this she stopped speaking and again buried her head in her hands. When she looked at us her face was again wincing in pain and tears began to steam down her face. “You already know what happened after that! You have his confession from the police,” she said between sobs. “Don’t ask me to re-live those moments. I can’t do it. I’m sorry. I can’t.” With this she stood up and walked out of the room with her hands to her face.

“Well Holmes,” I said, “it was obviously a terrible and traumatic event. The young woman has been put through a very trying time.”

“Hmm. So it appears. There are some logical inconsistencies in her story but her tears appear to be quite

genuine. I am sure she knows more than she has said, but her emotional fragility may inhibit our interviewing her further, at least for the time being."

My dear wife, Mary, gave me and then Holmes a look of measured disdain.

"I cannot believe that two men, one a doctor and the other England's greatest detective, could be so naïve. She's a fine young actress but that pretty little vixen was lying through her teeth."

Both Holmes and I looked at her in surprise.

"Darling," I began, "those tears were flowing copiously out of her eyes. How can you say she was acting?"

"Did neither of you notice the small pair of tweezers in her right hand? She used a trick known to every woman who appears on stage, and to almost all women who have to manipulate their fathers or husbands."

"What could she have done with a pair of tweezers?" I asked.

"Mr. Holmes," she said turning to the detective. "In your monograph on hair from the various parts of the body, have you investigated yet the properties of hair that is found in the nostril of the nose?"

"No I can't say I have yet."

"Well sir, then you should know that plucking one out with a pair of tweezers causes sharp but short-lived pain and induces a flood of tears. That is what Miss Alice did twice. When we first entered the house the door to her room was open and then quietly was closed when she heard us in the hallway. The 'I'm writing a letter' was a coy act that she and her father had rehearsed beforehand, and the look that passed between her and her father told me that they were playing their roles exactly as they had agreed to. And I would not doubt that in a moment her father will enter this room apologizing for his poor daughter's emotional distress."

She had no sooner spoken these words than Mr. John Turner entered the room, leaning on his cane and walking with great difficulty.

"I must apologize on my daughter's behalf for her not being able to continue the interview. This whole nasty business has been terribly trying for her. She's a brave little girl but you must understand that murder and the madness of her dear friend have been at times more than her gentle constitution has been able to bear. I am free now if there are any questions you wish to ask me and I promise that I will not flee in tears. I have been through many much worse ordeals and am still alive to speak about any of them." He spoke these words with a slow and grave voice, the solemnity accentuated by the highland brogue that betrayed his homeland. He sat down in the chair that his daughter had recently vacated.

A glance that said "I told you so" passed from Mary and Holmes.

Holmes nodded towards Mr. Turner and opened with his first question. "I gather that you are suffering from diabetes. Is that not what happened to your leg and causes you to limp so badly?"

"Ah, not one to waste time with pleasant chit-chat are we Mr. Holmes? Very well, sir. I have been afflicted with diabetes for several years. It has gotten progressively worse. The doctors had to amputate a portion of my right foot a year ago. While it has restricted my walking I am still able to enjoy the pleasure of riding my horses, as you observed earlier. My daughter has been lovingly teasing me that I have become the footless horseman of Sleepy Hollow when I take my old stallion, Bannockburn, out for a run. He and I have been quite the pair for many years."

Here he stopped and smiled, and Mary and I smiled briefly in return. Holmes did not smile. Mr. Turner continued, "It is not likely that I will live beyond Christmas. I had hoped that the Lord would grant me my full three score and ten

years and the joy of seeing the birth of my grandchildren but that is unlikely to happen. All I can do is to be grateful for those blessings that have come into my life.”

“Yes,” said Holmes. “We all must do that, of course. Your friendship with the McCarthy family sir. How did that begin, sir? And how has it continued for what I understand are many years?”

“As boys Charlie McCarthy and I were farm hands on adjacent properties in Aberdeen, over in the old country. We walked to school together every day for ten years. The Scots, as I am sure you know, are very firm on every child having his schooling no matter what his family situation. When we both turned sixteen years of age we left school, both of us having been diligent students if I say so myself, and determined to seek our fortune and future in America. After a year of working in the mills in Glasgow we saved up enough for our tickets and booked our passage. We came across in the year 1847. As we had good farm skills we were able immediately to find work on a cattle ranch in Pennsylvania. When it was announced that gold had been found in California the two of us, being still bachelors with no dependents, struck out immediately and joined the Forty-Niners.”

“And I understand that you were rather successful, were you not? You had good luck and struck it rich?” said Holmes.

“You will forgive me, sir, if I remind you that a firm Scots Calvinist does not put much store in luck. We believe in the blessings of the Lord, and the truth that the Lord helps them who help themselves. Our claim was no richer than our neighbors, but Charlie and I worked from dawn to dark every day for two years, excepting Sundays when we attended services at the little chapel in the village.

“We neither drank nor used tobacco, nor did we gamble or waste our money on riotous living. There were many hard men in California sir, and we did our best to avoid them. There were even some hard times between us but we carried

on and by the time our claim had been worked out we had both set aside a tidy sum, and with that we each bought ourselves farms, which is where you find our families today.”

“Your farms both did exceptionally well,” said Holmes. “Your cautious diligence has paid off.”

“Our first years were tough going, but then we heard that one of our country men, a Scot by the name of George Grant, was importing a superior breed of cattle from Scotland to America, the Aberdeen Angus. We could not turn down something from our home town so we acquired the license to bring them into New York State and built up strong herds ourselves. They proved to be the finest line of beef cattle in the country and we have lived well off of them. If you wish to come by on Sunday after church our cook will treat you to as fine a roast of beef as you will find on God’s earth.”

“If we are here on some Sunday in the future we will avail ourselves of your hospitality,” said Holmes. “For the moment we shall remain in the past. You said that there were some hard times between you and Mr. McCarthy. Is that how you would characterize your interactions with him over the years?”

“Ah no. Not at all. For the most part we got along well but as you know sir, lives move in different directions. Our interests diverged. Charles became a Republican and I sided with the Democrats. His interpretation of scriptures led him towards pacifism to the point he would never allow a firearm under his roof, whereas I became a bit of a collector. He stuck to farming as his sole source of income while I made some very fortunate investments in the markets, with the result that my family prospered somewhat more than his. I felt he was too harsh with his children and he felt that I was much too lenient with my daughter. These are just the usual differences that take place between men over a period of nearly half a century, but otherwise I think all would say that we got along as well as close neighbors could.”

“Were your properties formally tied to each other? Were you ever business partners?”

“No, as I said we went our separate ways,” the older man answered. Then after a pause added, “It is a confidential matter sir, but as you are a detective I am sure you would be able to discover it by yourself; all it would take would be a visit to the Land Registry Office. A year ago I paid him a fair sum of money to have the right of first refusal to purchase his property should anything happen to him. He agreed, and in that way our properties and now linked to each other.”

“And why would you do that, Mr. Turner?”

“Charles was in a bit of a tight spot for cash. He had just expanded his herd and did not wish to go to the bank for help for short term cash. I was concerned that should anything happen to him that Florence might panic and sell the farm to some unscrupulous type from the city, and then Alice and my grandchildren would have the strife that would go along with living beside poor neighbors. It seemed like a prudent provision for my heirs.” He paused for a moment and then began again. “I had also learned from my attorney, who was also attorney for Charles, that he had recently cut young James completely out of his will because of his fury at the direction the lad’s studies and habits were taking him. I was always fond of the boy and thought it grossly unfair to treat him so. I hold to very strong principles concerning the responsibilities of a father to his children and so I did what I could do to make sure that our two farms would pass to our children, young James in his case and my daughter Alice, in mine.”

“Explain to me please sir, how that would take place?”

“If Charlie were to die then I would purchase his farm from his estate according to the terms we agreed upon, and then once the estate was settled I would sell it back to Mrs. McCarthy for the same price. The only loss would be the fees paid to the attorneys but James would have the right to his

patrimony. I do not have chapter and verse from scripture to back up my conviction, sir, but that is what I believe."

"Very well, and most admirable," said Holmes. "About the actions and madness of the young lad; had there been anything in his past that would lead you to believe that he could kill his father and then turn mad?"

Turner nodded slowly and sucked in his lips, but just a fraction. "His mother of course denies it, she denies many things about her son that she is just too much of a loving mother to be able to see, but yes, as a child, and right up into his student days young James has suffered from what we just call his spells. As a toddler they took the form of temper tantrums, to which almost all children are prone, you will no doubt agree. Most normal children, of course, grow out of this behavior but James did not. He would have violent spasms of screaming and smashing things and kicking people and just dreadful language. These would continue for a few minutes and then end, and he would collapse in tears and say how sorry he was. And then there would be nothing of the sort for several months and then we would hear of his having a spell again.

"His mother tried to provide cover for his rages, and his father simply shouted at his and gave him a beating afterwards, which did no good whatsoever. It just drove the poor boy into a brain fever where he would sit for hours on end without moving or saying anything. It was a cause of great strife between father and son. So yes, Mr. Holmes, his spell, the killing of his father, and his lapsing into madness are not at all surprising. What is so tragic is that after this most recent time his father is dead and the madness has settled on him permanently. We are all deeply saddened by what has happened."

"I have no doubt it has been very trying for all of you, sir," said Holmes. "If you will permit me to explore just one more issue, and then we shall leave you to your work and your family."

“By all means.”

“Concerning your friend and neighbor, Charles McCarthy; did he have any enemies that you know of?”

“Not one in the world. He seemed to get along well with everybody, everybody that is except for his younger son. Not that he was all hail-fellow-well-met of course. He was a quiet and serious man. They don’t call us dour Scots for nothing. But no, he was beyond reproach in all aspects of his personal and business life. So no sir. No enemies. Not a one.”

“Thank you Mr. Turner,” said Holmes, rising from his chair. Mary and I followed his action and stood up as well. “We greatly appreciate your time. Please give our sympathies to your daughter and let her know how sorry we are to have so distressed her. If we could impose upon your driver to take us back to our hotel we would be most grateful.”

“Very happy to help in whatever way I can. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mrs. McCarthy. We do hope that your work will help to allay her fears and accept that the Lord works in mysterious ways, and will work all things together for good in His own time.”

The Turner carriage picked us up at the front door of the great stone house and drove us back into Tarrytown. Holmes said nothing the entire route and I could see that the wheels of his brain were turning over the conflicting accounts we had received during the course of the day. He did not join Mary and I for dinner, permitting us a quiet time together, followed by a leisurely stroll along the river. There was a note waiting for us on our return. It read:

First thing tomorrow we leave to meet the mad man in the insane asylum. Will be at the station for the 8:00 o’clock train. Returning late afternoon. Holmes.

We retired for the night to our room and went to bed at an early hour. I lay in bed without sleeping until I was sure that my wife was sound asleep, whereupon I rose slowly, without so much as causing a ripple in the mattress, and walked silently to the adjoining lavatory. My wife’s manicure

kit lay on the counter and from it I withdrew her small pair of tweezers. With the help of a polished mirror I located one of many hairs inside my left nostril, clutched it with the tweezers and gave it a good yank.

“AAAARRRRRRRGGGGHHH!!” is what I would have screamed out loud had I not pushed the flashy part of my hand into my mouth to muffle the involuntary cry of acute pain. In the mirror I could see a flood of tears pouring out of my eyes, down my face and dribbling into the hand basin. Using a hand towel I wiped my face and my running nose, and after waiting a few minutes for my recovery to take hold I turned down the light and returned silently to my bed and re-entered it, again without making a sound.

“It works, does it not, dear?” my non-sleeping wife said.

“What? Oh that. Yes. Yes. Rather well.”

“Go to sleep, John.”

6 MATTAWAN

The early morning brought us to the train station and the sight of the tall thin figure of Sherlock Holmes pacing up and down the platform. He continued to pace non-stop until we boarded the train and were seated in our cabin. After we pulled out of the station he looked at me and spoke.

"I must beg your indulgence my dear friend, but I took the liberty of acting in your good name."

"I am not sure what good that would ever do you, but I am not worried about your sully my reputation. Allow me to ask what it is that that you have gotten me into?"

"In order to be able to meet with the young man, who is closely guarded in a highly secured institution, I had to claim reasons of medical investigation, and as you are one of the leading criminal pathologists in England you were granted access."

"You flatter me Holmes and I am quite sure that no one here has read the journals of criminal pathology and if they had they would know that I was anything but a leader in that field."

"Ah yes," he replied. "But they had it seems read your stories about some detective named Sherlock Holmes and were eager for you to visit, and ever rather more eager when I, pretending to be you, told them that I was bringing your detective friend along. They do not read the medical journals but it appears that they do read your absurdly romanticized stories about me, and I will confess that such publicity is occasionally useful."

"Always happy to be if use, Holmes," I said and would make note of this occasion for the next time he laid a stripe or two upon my hide for my stories. "And may I intrude, as it

would be helpful for writing of my next story, and ask you if you have formed any conclusion yet about this American case?"

For a full minute he closed his eyes and ignored my question, but then responded. "I do not yet have enough data to form a definite conclusion, and the accounts of what took place are inconsistent with each other, as you have no doubt noted." He closed his eyes, rested his head on the back of the seat. One would have thought he had fallen asleep except for the occasional furrowing of his brow and the movement of his lips as he carried out interrogations inside his fervent brain. He continued in this state for nearly ninety minutes, opening his eyes only when our destination was announced by the young purser as he passed through the cars.

Among the English it is a well-known fact that Americans are predisposed to locking each other up in prisons for every conceivable crime and misdemeanor. One of our hacks on Fleet Street recently accused them of creating the crime of "walking while negro" as sufficient reason for a sentence of two years less a day. Along a more serious line, it was a relief to see that the powers that be on this side of the pond had finally ceased placing those poor souls who were obviously mentally unbalanced in with the general population of the nation's prisons. Across the country they were building a collection of large sprawling institutions for the insane, and several for the criminally insane. Mattawan, a village on the east bank of the Hudson was one such facility. Its twenty acres were surrounded by a high fence, but once inside it was as pleasant a place as the finest estate in England, with well-kept flower beds, gracious elm trees, and rolling green lawns. The guards at the gate had received a notice of our visit and welcomed us. One even had a recent copy of *The Strand* and prevailed upon the three of us to sign it for him.

"Ahh, guden zee morning, Herr Holmes, Docteur and Frau Watson. Velcome to Mattavan." The director of the institution

greeted us in the grand but antiseptic entrance of the main building. "Ich bein Docteur Ludvig Schweitzbruger, zee directeur of zees excellent facility. You vill agree zat it is zee most progressive facility of eets kind. Vell ahead, ve believe of any in England, would you not agree? Biten, please, come into my office."

The office was new and gleaming, with a window at the far end, in front of which sat the director's desk. The entire left wall held shelves of books and journals. The other had over twenty framed certificates and citations, newspaper clippings and photographs. The good doctor was not lacking in credentials and recognition. Several were in German and bore the crest of some institution in Vienna. A small and very modest one was given by the George Washington High School in Hoboken, New Jersey and read "Louis Schwartz, Junior Rowing Champion."

"I must tell you zat ve are very puzzled by zee case of young Herr James McCarthy. Ven he is arrived here he is acting vild and uncontrolled as eef he is inhabited by a personality other zan hees own. He ees not violent, just very loud. Ven ve put him in hees room and lock zee door he becomes quiet. He ask veery nicely can he have books to read and ve agree and bring to him books from zee library. All zee time he is reading zem, and zen he ask for paper and pen and ink and zen he is reading and writing. At meal times he says nutting to ze rest of zee patients and eats in silence. But ven we bring him to the therapy he leesen politely to the first question and zen he goes to madness. He keeps saying zat he is zee headless horseman and pretends to be galloping on his stallion and throwing pumpkins all over zee place. And zen he changes and pretends to be Prince Hamlet an recites from your Shakespeare and he jumps around and vaves his arms and zen when he is returned to his room where he vonce again reads hees books and beings to write. Very strange. Very strange indeed, Herr Docteur."

"Yes. Yes, I must say. Intermittent multiple personalities. Very strange. I am not aware of any other case like that described in the journals." I said and tried to act as I assumed a doctor of psychology might act. For effect I rubbed my chin.

"If it is not too much trouble we would like to meet with the patient and be able to record his symptoms. I would like to write a monograph about him and his progressive treatment at your institution, and an extended time with him would be very helpful, with your consent of course, Director."

"Of course, of course," said the director. "Followen zee me. He ees harmless and so vee let him spend zee days out of doors vere he reads all zee day long. He only acts like zee crazy man ven ve try to talk to him. A very curious case indeed sir."

The Director led us to a bench below a spreading oak tree. On it sat a young man apparently engrossed in a book.

"I vill leave you to speak to him and I vish you vell," said the Director and he turned back towards the central building.

Sherlock Holmes strode purposefully towards the young man, raised his walking stick and smartly brought it down on the book, dashing it out of the hands of its reader. The young man, a comely youth, looked up, startled, as Holmes brought his face to within a few inches of the chap who had been diagnosed as criminally insane.

"James McCarthy," said Holmes loudly to the very uncomfortable young man, "this pretend act of yours is breaking your mother's heart, and letting those who murdered your father escape. Now are you going to keep it up or are you going to help me catch whoever killed your father and bring him to justice?"

"Who are you?" James McCarthy asked in a trembling voice.

“My name is Sherlock Holmes and this is my colleague Dr. Watson. I believe you have heard of us. Your mother has asked us to help prove your innocence and find the villains who murdered your father. Now are you going to help us or are you going to keep up this silly act of yours and leave your mother to suffer?”

A flicker of a smile crept across the lad's face, of the sort one expects to see when a fan of a celebrated person finds himself in the presence of his idol. A moment later his countenance changed and he gave us a wild look. He grabbed first Holmes's hand and then mine and pumped them up and down.

“My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenholmes? Ah, Rosenwatson! Good lads, how do ye both?”

Following this He jumped up from his seat and stood on the bench, towering above us, and began to shout.

“I have of late—but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you . . .”

He gesticulated expansively towards the sky.

“ . . . this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.”

On “vapors” he collapsed on the ground and began to sniff the earth.

He crawled over to the feet of Sherlock Holmes and with a look of desperate pleading continued.

“What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!”

I was quite sure that Sherlock Holmes had seldom been described in such glowing terms. But then Prince Hamlet

leapt to his feet, ran to the oak tree and began to bang his head into the tree trunk, continuing his speech.

“And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust!?”

I observed that he had carefully placed the back of his hand against the bark and was smashing his head into the soft palm of his hand.

He looked over at us for a moment and changed scenes.

“But that the dread of something after death; The undiscover'd country from whose birth; No traveler returns, puzzles the will; and makes us rather bear those ills we have; Than fly to others that we do not know about . . .”

At that point Holmes brought his walking stick down loudly on the bench.

“Wrong! The line reads “Than fly to others that we know not of” Now do it over again from ‘To die to sleep’, and it’s not ‘birth’, its ‘bourn’. Now do it again and do it properly this time! Go!”

“Oh, sorry sir. I’ll try to get it right,” the young man said quietly. For a moment a look of knowing passed between him and Holmes and then he leapt back up on the bench and resumed his shouting. “To die! To sleep . . .” and on he went. Holmes watched him for a few more minutes and then shrugged his shoulders and turned to walk away. The young actor was not about to give up his pretense. He stopped his shouting for a moment as he watched us depart, and then shouted one last time. “Noble sir, forget you not that the play’s the thing wherein you will catch the conscience of the king!” Then he stepped back down from the bench, picked up his book and walked away from us towards the closest building.

After he was out of earshot I turned to Holmes. “Obviously he is not mad and only acting, but I cannot deduce any reason. I am inclined to think that he knows who had done it and is screening him. But why is he doing it? He knows he is breaking his mother’s heart, yet he persists.”

"Because he is afraid. He fears for his life," replied Holmes. "If what Miss Morstan said to us is true, and I have no reason to doubt her words, then he was told that he is next and he has come to the one place where he thinks he will have immediate protection and security. We could not have entered these grounds without your medical credentials and my reputation. It would be quite difficult, he believes, if not impossible for an anonymous murderer to gain entry, kill him, and get away without being apprehended or at least identified. He believes that the madhouse is his safe haven."

"But from whom?" I asked.

"That is exactly what we do not yet know, and what we must deduce before someone does manage to penetrate this institution and do harm to this young thespian."

The three of us departed the Mattawan Institution after stopping to pay our respects to the Director, and made our way to the train station. Holmes, as I expected, said nothing and I could see him turning over the events of the past hour in his mind.

"The wasting of my time is always a source of annoyance, and this journey has been a complete waste of time. We know no more that we did this morning, except that the boy is a passably good actor who needs to do a better job memorizing his lines."

"Mr. Holmes," Mary responded, "I believe that you know at least one thing that you did not before."

Holmes smiled at her. "At just what, my dear, is that?"

"His final message to you as we turned and departed was not made in vain," she said.

"You mean his repeating 'The play's the thing' line?" I asked.

"Yes. He was telling you something. He could have chosen any one of a hundred other lines but he chose that one and he had a reason for doing so."

"I am inclined to believe that you are right," said Holmes. "But there has been no reference in any other evidence concerning this case that a "play" is involved. So we remain at a dead end."

"Is it not correct," asked Mary, "that James, and Alice and the two friends who came to visit were all involved in theater activities whilst at college? And were we not told that one of the activities that they had planned to pursue was the preparation and rehearsing of some piece of theater that they were preparing for the fall?"

"That is an excellent observation," said Holmes. "But it does not lead us any closer to the murderer or any reason for the killing of Mr. McCarthy."

After this Holmes lapsed again into silence and said nothing during the journey back to Tarrytown or on our walk back to the hotel from the station. Before leaving us to return to his room he said, "I would be very happy if the two of you would permit me to join you for dinner this evening. There is a hypothesis upon which I would appreciate your opinions."

Dinner was a pleasant affair on the porch of the hotel, looking out over the lovely vista of the Hudson River. We chatted amiably throughout the meal until we had finished our desserts and brandies. Holmes took out his pipe and in his practiced ritual prepared it, lit it, and inhaled a long draught of tobacco. "I have said many more times than either you or I can remember, Watson, that the science of deduction requires a complete analysis of every possible answer. When you have eliminated all possible alternatives, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

"Holmes," I replied, "that is exactly what you have said time and time again. So do proceed and eliminate the other possibilities and let us know what you have deduced."

"A murderer must have a motive, and available means of committing his crime, and an opportunity to do so. There are

only a select few people who were part of Mr. McCarthy's circle and only one of them appears to have had all three. His widow can be excluded as the reports from all sides confirm that she was asleep at the time of the crime, was sent into a state of shock and distress upon seeing her husband's body, and had nothing whatsoever to gain financially or otherwise by his passing."

Yes, but," said Mary, "there was the question raised by Miss Alice about a past romantic connection between her husband and long departed Mrs. Turner. Could that not have been a strong enough reason for her to want to do her husband in? People have committed crimes of passion for lesser reasons, have they not?"

"Indeed they have," said Holmes. "And the forces contained within the human heart, both male and female, are among the most uncontrollable and unpredictable on earth. But I must ask you, my dear Mrs. Watson, was there any scintilla of evidence that you, as another woman, detected in Mrs. McCarthy, that would suggest that she was capable of such a crime of passion?"

"None whatsoever," Mary replied immediately. "She is a sensible mature woman who is not going to do in a perfectly good, healthy husband. They are hard to come by once past sixty. The only source of the story of a romantic connection between them came from Alice the little liar, and it is inconceivable that Mrs. McCarthy would bring you across the Atlantic to investigate a crime if she were the perpetrator."

"Well said," affirmed Holmes. "So let us eliminate the suffering widow. Now then let us move on to the servants. Only one of them was in the house at the time of the murder, the young negress, Miss Patience Moran. Is there any evidence anywhere to suggest that she could have committed murder?"

"No," answered both Mary and I in unison.

"Correct, of course," affirmed Holmes, "and now the young woman, the 'little vixen who lied through her teeth'

as you, Mrs. Watson, so frankly described her. We all know that it is a serious prejudice of the public and the police to refuse to believe that a young female who is well-mannered and beautiful could not possibly be capable of horrific crimes. My experience and the annals of heinous crimes of the past century prove that exactly the opposite has at times been the truth. So then, our Miss Alice, did she have motive, method, and opportunity?"

"She appears to have had none, Holmes," I ventured. "The testimony of the colored girl, who said that she came to her house and informed her after the event took place and her reaction to it would appear to exclude her from consideration."

"I agree," said Holmes. "So we come to the young mad man. What say you, Watson? You are a man of science and medicine. Do you believe the story about his spell of possession by an evil force, followed by a weeping confession, and then his fits of convenient madness?"

"Not for a moment. All of that was a complete pretense. But it does not necessarily mean that he did not have reason for killing his father. There appears to have been some tension between them arising from the death of the older brother, the young lad's determination to pursue of life different from the wishes of his father, the possibility of his being cut out of his inheritance. All of these would constitute a motive, and he had the means, and the opportunity."

"Correct. Those are plausible reasons for us to believe that he could have murdered his father. On the other hand, what are the reasons that militate against his doing so?"

"His mother's strong conviction that he could not have done it," offered Mary. "As well as the testimony of the colored girl that she found him standing at the window, and that she saw and heard another person, most likely the real murderer. The only information we had concerning his spells

and his conflict with his father came from Alice and Mr. Turner. Alice was lying and her father is inscrutable.”

“All true,” said Holmes. “On top of which there is the police report.”

“I saw nothing there, Holmes,” I said. “It just contained the few facts of the crime scene and mostly dealt with James’s confession.”

“What did he say about the wound to the head?”

“That it entered from the back section of the parietal bone, passed through the left cerebral hemisphere, penetrated to the hypothalamus and was immediately fatal,” I replied.

“There was no evidence that the body was moved and so there is only one possible location for the murderer to be standing when he shot Mr. McCarthy,” said Holmes.

“Directly behind him and a little to the left,” said Mary.

“Precisely,” said Holmes. “It is totally unreasonable that the young man would enter his father’s office, pick up a gun that was lying on the desk, walk around behind him and then shoot him directly from behind with the father never moving his gaze from looking forward across his desk. The lad’s confession does not pass muster, and I am disappointed that the local police detective would accept it. But I have known our own constables and even some of the imbeciles at Scotland Yard to overlook much more obvious evidence, so I am not surprised. All of these facts added together render it impossible that the boy killed his father. His madness and confession are a fabrication. And yet . . . and yet . . . there is the staggering question of ‘Why?’ Why would he make up such a story? Why would he so hurt his mother and endure being locked up in the mad house? What does he know and who is he trying to protect?”

“And must we not,” asked Mary, “put forward the same question concerning Miss Alice? Why would she be so determined to deceive us? And to try to affirm the madness of young James? She had no reason to do so.”

“Unless,” said Holmes, “she knew the identity of the murderer and was protecting him. And having eliminated all other possible actors we are left with only one.”

“You do not mean to say, Holmes, that the lame old man murdered his boyhood friend!?” I sputtered in disbelief. “That is unthinkable.”

“No, my dear Watson, when dealing with crime, especially with the crime of murder carried out in the context of desperation and passion, nothing is unthinkable. Improbable perhaps. But if it is the only remaining possibility, then it must be the truth.”

Mary and I said nothing for several minutes. Then she turned to Holmes with a look of bewilderment. “How then do you account for the young man’s screaming oaths at the murderer as he escaped, and within a few hours feigning madness to protect him?”

“Ah, for that I do not have an answer. It is the missing piece of the puzzle. But I believe that if we present all the evidence to the old man he may, seeing as he has no escaping the truth, be willing to enlighten us. Tomorrow morning I will summon him here and we shall try to find out.”

7 THE NON-CONFESSION

"Mr. John Turner," announced the hotel bell boy, opening the door of our sitting room and ushering in our visitor.

The man entered slowly, limping. His body still gave evidence of unusual strength, but his face was an ashen white, and his lips tinged with a shade of blue. His deadly chronic disease had diminished him even in the brief time since we had last seen him.

He sat heavily in the sofa, his energy spent on his travel from his home to the hotel.

"Your note said you wished to see me. You said that there could be terrible criminal consequences for my daughter Alice, and young James McCarthy. You knew that such a note would force me to leave my home and endure the pain of even the short distance into town. So what is it you have to tell me Mr. Holmes? Please get on with it."

"I see you also have little patience for idle chit-chat," said Holmes. "Very well, Mr. Turner. Your daughter and her dear friend, James McCarthy, risk being charged with being accomplices to murder and sent to prison. I will have no choice but to turn them over to the police along with the evidence that clearly points to you as the murderer of Charles McCarthy."

The old man slouched and dropped his powerful shoulders until he looked a decrepit and sunken figure, despair in his weary eyes. For a minute he lowered his head and leaned upon his walking stock. Then he lifted his head and in what I saw was a force of sheer will and determination, smiled cunningly back at Sherlock Holmes. "And what evidence beyond your conjecture do you have to give the police, Mr. Holmes?"

“By your own account, sir, you had more than sufficient motive to get rid of your friend, or should I say your former friend. The two of you were long past the warm closeness of your youth. You stood to gain a very great deal in wealth and property from your right of first refusal to his property, taken, as you have yourself admitted, at a time when McCarthy was at a pecuniary disadvantage. For years you harbored a jealousy towards him because of your affection for his wife, made particularly poisonous after your own wife’s passing, as you saw him continuing in married bliss while you lived alone. You knew he had cut his son out of his inheritance, and you managed somehow to convince your daughter and son to be part of your conspiracy, and perhaps even their college friends. Young James pretended to be mad so that he could draw all attention away from you. He will soon be brought to trial, declared to have been only temporarily insane and allowed to walk free. He and your daughter will end up wealthy and secure, as will the grandchildren who you will never live to see. So perhaps sir you would like to confess your foul deed now or your daughter and James will spend their youth in prison instead of enjoying their family estates.

“You may be lame but you have revealed that you are still capable of riding a horse, which you did on the night of June the third. You entered the McCarthy house, with which you are intimately familiar, unseen, hid yourself behind the draperies to the rear of McCarthy’s desk, and when you knew that the rest of the house had gone to sleep you shot him from behind and escaped to your horse before any of the household could stop or identify you. What is beyond me is how you could have so twisted the consciences of two innocent young people, including your own daughter, to collude with you in such a vile deed. You claim, sir, to be a Christian. May I suggest that you might wish to clear your conscience before you have to account for your deeds in front of almighty God.”

Mr. Turner stared at Holmes for a moment and then, appearing to admit defeat he nodded. "Mr. Holmes, your reputation as a detective is well-deserved. I will however confess to nothing whatsoever. If you press your case with the police you will find that I have an iron-clad alibi and several people of excellent reputation will swear under oath that I could not have committed the deed of which you accuse me. I am willing, however, to enlighten you concerning some of the facts about Charles McCarthy that you clearly have not yet discovered for yourself and which are responsible for his violent death. Do you wish me to proceed, Mr. Holmes?"

This was not the reply that Sherlock Holmes had expected and he said nothing for a moment. Then he gave his forced smile to the old man and said, "You may enlighten me."

"I am sure Doctor Watson," he said looking in my direction, "that you are aware of the psychological condition that has been named 'sexual inversion,' are you not? And perhaps you are as well, Mr. Holmes? Our poet, Whitman, was fond of calling it 'adhesive love.'"

"It is the psychological disposition which, if not kept in check, may lead to the practice of sodomy," I responded. "Yes. I am familiar with it. It has been observed amongst some English school boys."

"Indeed if not half of Oxford and Cambridge," added Holmes brusquely. "But we are not here to talk about sexual deviations. You are supposed to be enlightening us concerning the murder of Charles McCarthy and your red herring is of little interest."

"Ah, but they are intimately connected to the matter," responded the old Scot gravely. "For reasons that God alone knows, young James exhibited what could only be termed effeminate tendencies since he was a child. He was always overly dramatic, given to flamboyant behavior and dress, and interested only in music, poetry, theater, and pretty

paintings, and not at all in the many sports of rugby or boxing, nor in any aspect whatsoever of military life. I have already told you that his determination not to attend West Point and pursue a military career, in the footsteps of his older brother, was a cause of considerable friction between him and his father.”

“You have indeed already told us that,” said Holmes. “Please continue, and I assume that this psychological analysis is leading somewhere.”

Mr. Turner paused for a moment, making a point of not immediately acceding to Holmes’s impatient demand. “I assume that you are also aware, sir, if you have indeed done your homework as a detective, that both Charles McCarthy and I were reared in strict Calvinist faith. As the years passed I confess that my adherence to the strictures of the Church loosened and, conscious of my own sins and failures, I became far more tolerant of those who held different beliefs to mine and whose behavior and tastes were foreign to me, but in whom I was able to discern basic goodness and generosity and kindness towards their fellow man. I have already told you that Charles and I parted ways over the years and this was one of those issues on which our paths diverged. He became progressively more devout, more rigid in his beliefs, more intolerant of those who he felt had grievously sinned and committed serious moral failures.”

“There are many men who hold to severe moral positions,” said Holmes, again impatiently. “What does that have to do with murder?”

“When his son, James, went off to Harvard last year he immediately associated himself with other students who were active in the theater club; they called themselves the Hasty Pudding Society. As you know, I assume, the theater crowd attracts many young men like James who are inclined to sexual inversion and to seek physical intimacy amongst the members of their own sex instead of with the opposite. James’s closest friends were also that way inclined. It all

might have been quite harmless except that word came back to Charles from reliable sources that James had indeed crossed the line and was engaging secretly but regularly in the actual practice of forbidden love with a fellow male student."

"Very well, sir, you are now telling me that James is a sodomite who is attracted to other theater types. Wherein is the connection?"

Again the old man paused and then continued. "Charles was enraged by the news. He was beside himself with righteous indignation. He and I had some very unpleasant arguments about it. He would quote verses from the Bible that if honored today would condemn his son to death. He felt that he had no other course of action before God but to denounce the boy, cut him off from his inheritance, publically expose and shame him, and cast him out from the household. He had said nothing about this to Florence, to Mrs. McCarthy, not wanting to expose her to such depravity and humiliation. But he was determined to take these steps even if they were to ruin the life of his only remaining son."

"He would not be the first father to disown his son for such reasons, nor will he be the last," said Holmes. "It may be sad and tragic but there is not sufficient reason here for a neighbor to kill his neighbor. What business was it of yours that there was strife between a father and son on the next farm over?"

John Turner looked hard at Sherlock Holmes for a long time before speaking. "Because Mr. Holmes, because my dear little girl, my beautiful daughter Alice, who has been the joy of my life and lovingly cared for me since the passing of her mother eight years ago, shares a similar but opposite sexual inversion. Her romantic desires are singularly Sapphic. It is why she likewise found her friends amongst the theater club on campus. Charlie was not just going to destroy the life of his son by disowning and publically shaming him, he would have done the same to my daughter

and all of their friends. My little girl would be entangled in the same web. I could not suffer that to happen. I would not go to my grave knowing that I had done nothing to prevent him from destroying the lives of such a wonderful group of joyful young people, whose only sin was to be sexually attracted to that to which you and I are not.

“As you appear to have deduced, Mr. Holmes, I determined to rescue my daughter, James and their friends from the fate that Charlie would have struck them down with. I will confess nothing except to admit that our prayer meeting was a conspiracy during which time we agreed upon a plan that we believed could be carried off. I told you two days ago that I did not expect to live past Christmas. That was not the brutal truth. My doctors have advised me that I will not live to see the equinox.”

Here he paused. The flush of anger that had been present during his earlier speaking departed from his face. “The case is now in your hands, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the famous detective. You have solved it. And I can only assure of three things that are certain to come to pass.”

Holmes said nothing, but he nodded his head indicating that he was attentive.

“The first is that if you press this case to the police and the courts I will be dead long before it comes before a judge. The second is that my alibi will stand firm and be supported by many witnesses. And the third is that the attorneys representing the estate of the deceased will expose all the facts about James and Alice that I have confided to you and that their lives and those of their friends will become fodder for the press.

“I can also swear to you, as a Presbyterian, as a man whose word has been his bond for over sixty years, and as a proud Scotsman, that on the day I go to face my Maker a document will be released by a respected attorney in New York that will admit to whatever acts I may be guilty of, that will fully exonerate James McCarthy, and that will assure that

both my only child and that of Charles McCarthy will continue to enjoy their property and their dignity, and that Mrs. McCarthy will live in peace and comfort in her home for the rest of her days.

"The choice is yours, Mr. Holmes. You are free to cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war, and the consequences will be on your conscience for the rest of your life."

With this he leaned forward and with great effort raised his large body from the sofa and, leaning heavily on his canes, tottering and shaking in all his great frame stumbled slowly from the room. One of the hotel maids moved quickly to his side, took his arm and helped him to his carriage.

Holmes was silent and buried in thought with a pained expression on his face. He watched the old highlander as he departed and then with a sigh quietly said, "There but for the grace of God goes Sherlock Holmes."

Holmes sat quietly for the next half-hour. The same young maid who had helped Mr. Turner to his carriage appeared bearing a tray of tea. Mary looked up at her and said, "Miss Patience, thank you. I did not know that you worked at the hotel as well as for McCarthy Manor."

"I work here on the weekends," the young woman said quietly as she served the tea, and then she retired from the room.

Holmes sipped slowly on the tea and then put the cup and saucer down and looked at Mary and me.

"The old fellow has tied my hands," he said. "He is quite right that if I take this now to the police he will be long gone from the living before the case ever reaches a court. There is no doubt that he has sufficient funds and obligations owed to him to secure all the reliable witnesses he needs to defend himself. I fear that he has given me no alternative but to leave whatever punishment is due to him to a higher power, and believe that justice will be carried out in eternity better than it is on earth."

"I have no choice but to go now and inform my client, Mrs. McCarthy, that while justice will not be done, her son will be fully exonerated and restored to her, Lord willing within time for him not to lose his year at Harvard. I will take myself now to speak to her, and then we will depart in the morning and make our way back to England."

I could read the disappointment and resignation on the face of Sherlock Holmes as he strode slowly out of the room. Mary and I chatted back and forth about what had just taken place in front of us. We agreed that Sherlock Holmes had made the right decision and taken the best course of action, no matter how deeply painful it was to him to let a criminal, even one with honorable motives, walk away scot-free.

"I must admit," said Mary as we took one last stroll along the river bank, "the boy and the girl were truly remarkable actors. They had me completely fooled."

"What do you mean?" I said. "You spotted Alice right away with her tweezers, and James's rendition of Hamlet fooled no one."

"No, no. I mean that I would never have guessed that either of them was, what did he call them, 'sexually inverted'? I attended a school for girls for over ten years and thought I could spot any who were sapphically inclined. When we used to meet with the boys' school we could see immediately which ones were attracted to young gentlemen and which were not. The same was true of the boys who were obviously not interested in girls. I would have said that both James and Alice were every bit as inclined as you and I are, John. But it appears that they are not. They were exceptionally good young actors."

"Ah, but perhaps they have had to practice their roles all their lives, growing up as they did in such strict households."

"Hmm. Yes. Perhaps."

8 BACK TO NEW YORK

Come the morning Mary and I we packed up our belongings and took breakfast on the hotel porch. Holmes did not join us. As it was Sunday there was no early train and we waited until nearly ten o'clock before preparing to leave for the station. Miss Patience Moran was again on duty and appeared at the top of the staircase carrying my valise and Mary's hand case. Behind her were two boys carrying the steamer trunk. All was loaded into the hotel carriage and we waited for Sherlock Holmes to join us. He did so shortly, carrying his own valise and followed by the boys with his trunk. He climbed into the carriage, nodded perfunctorily to both of us, sat down, and opened a book. He said not a word on route to the station, and not a word all the way to Manhattan. Twice he excused himself from the cabin and spent close to twenty minutes pacing back and forth the length of the train.

Mary and I chatted and enjoyed the grandeur of Hudson River Valley and wondered yet again about the origins of the story of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow. We amused ourselves with fantasies of what we would have said to the chap had we run into him.

It was late afternoon by the time we reached our hotel in mid-town Manhattan. I asked Holmes if he would join us for dinner but he declined, as I had expected he would. Upon entering our spacious hotel room I opened my valise and prepared to retrieve something to read for the evening. Sitting on top on my journals and notebooks was a thick stack of papers that I did not recognize.

"Mary, darling," I called to my wife. "Did you put some papers inside my valise before leaving Tarrytown."

“No dear. Why?”

“There are several items here that are not mine.”

I took out two thick stapled manuscripts and a small set of notes that were held together with a clip. The first, a new document on clean crisp white paper bore the title on the front page:

The Stinx
A Playful Portrait of Terrible Times in the
Tenderloin
By the Harvard Hasty Pudding Theater Club

The second was a much older document, handwritten in a masculine but legible hand and entitled:

Calumny and Criminality in
California, A Memoir of the Forty-
Niners.
By Charlie McCarthy

The small group of notes appeared to be copies of telegrams and receipts.

Mary and I looked these things over and she said, “John, dear, I think you should call Sherlock and let him look at these.”

I bundled up the papers and we walked across the hall to his room. There was a “Do Not Disturb” sign attached to the door handle. I fully anticipated the reaction that my knocking firmly would elicit and smiled a bit of an impish smile at my wife before striking the door loudly.

“I do not wish to be disturbed,” came the voice from the other side of the door. Whereupon I knocked again, adding more knocks and increasing the volume.

“I said that I do not wish to be disturbed!” came the reply louder and with a sharp tone of being seriously annoyed.

One more time I struck the door, this time with my open palm so as to make it as loud as possible.

"Confound it, do they not teach hotel staff how to read in America?" we heard Holmes shouting as he approached the door. He swung the door open, shouting "I SAID . . ." He stopped when he saw it was Mary and I. Before he could utter another word I said, "Holmes, you have to read these documents immediately. Your case is not over yet."

He looked at the documents in my hand, took them from me, and glanced over them.

"Come in please," he said quietly. "Please sit down."

We sat and Holmes divided the papers among the three of us. We each read the allotted portion and passed it along to the next person until all of us had read the entire bundle.

"May I have your thoughts and insights, Dr. and Mrs. Watson?"

Mary began. "This memoir was written by the late Mr. Charles McCarthy but quite a long time ago. From the contents and the reference I would guess that it must have been written in the 1850s or the 1860s at the latest. The story it contains is very disturbing. It recounts serious theft, possible murder and swindling on a grand scale. If the stories are true then there are some very vicious criminals still at large who committed some heinous crimes back during the days of the gold rush in California."

"That is what I read as well," said Holmes. "And the script of the play, your thoughts on that my dear doctor."

"It purports to be a comedy, but it is anything but," I offered. "The first act is a re-enactment of the story in the memoir. The second act places the villains from the first act in positions of power and authority here in New York City and has them engaging in all sorts of bribes, extortions, assaults, and even a murder or two. If any of this is based on fact then it is no less than a revelation of a dangerous and extensive criminal syndicate that has corrupted the city and

is determined at all costs to extract riches at the expense of the citizens.”

“Indeed it does,” said Holmes. “And it fits quite closely with the stories we heard during our late dinner at the Haymarket. It appears that Charles, his son James, and their friends in the theater club were on to something, and may have been dealing with a far greater force of evil than they knew of. But what of these notes? Mary, what do you think about them?”

“The most disturbing is this clipping from a newspaper in New Haven.”

“Could you read it aloud to us?” asked Holmes.

“It is dated the first of June and the headline runs:

Tragic Death at Lighthouse Point.

And the notice says:

The morning dawn extinguished not only the light of the Point Lighthouse but also the light of the life of a popular young man and scion of one of the most respected families of New Haven. The body of Michael DuPlessis, son of Danton and Muriel DuPlessis of Grand Avenue in Fair Haven, was found by early morning fishermen washed up on the beach to the south of the Lighthouse. The local police have not released any details of their investigation but it is known that the young man was a strong swimmer and had no history of abusing alcohol. Foul

play has not been ruled out. A friend of the family told our reporter that the young man will be greatly missed and mourned. He had just returned from his first year at Harvard, had a stellar life and career ahead of him, and was outstanding both as an athlete and an enthusiastic member of the Hasty Pudding Theater Troop. Funeral arrangements will be announced in the newspaper as soon as they are made known to the public.”

Mary looked up at the two of us. “That would have been just two days before Mr. McCarthy was killed. This young man from New Haven must have been a friend to James and Alice at college. Somebody was prepared to do murder to keep a damning story from becoming known.”

“Exactly,” said Holmes. “The other notes - please read them as well.”

“There is a copy of a telegram to Mr. Turner from the Plaza Hotel in New York confirming his reservation on the night of June the third, and says ‘usual room and rates apply.’ Then one to him as well from a Doctor Williams on Central Park South that just says ‘Appointment confirmed for eight o’clock June 4th.’

“There is one from someone named Bruce that reads:

Paul killed last night. Cam and I on our way post haste. All must take cover.

“It is dated on the second of June.”

“Then there are two sent by Alice the first is to ‘All Members HPC’ and reads.

Destroy all copies of script immediately. Seek protection now. Paul and Mr. McC already murdered. James is protected. Father has hired Pinkertons. Villains are killers.

“The second reads:

Dearest cousin: Marriage to James has been postponed due to tragedy that you already know about. All still very private. Please say nothing to others yet. Your love and support deeply appreciated. Alice.

“Finally there is this handwritten note, written by a woman and it says:

Holmes and Watson: Both families still in danger of their lives. Do not leave them to fend for themselves. They will be killed.’

And it is signed ‘P.M’

Sherlock Holmes sat back in his chair, placed the tips of his long fingers together and closed his eyes.

“That canny old Scotsman. That dour old lame man with his sad face and sonorous voice. He completely took me in. He dropped just enough hints, so very subtly, that tricked me into deducing that he was the murderer. A truly remarkable performance. He has taken very decisive and clever steps to protect both his family and the McCarthys. Sexual inversions, crazy Calvinists, short of cash from buying cows . . .ha! . . . remarkable, all, truly remarkable.

“It would also appear,” he continued, “that our young negro maid, Miss Patience Moran, has been doing a far better job of being a detective than I have been. And it also appears that the murderers we are dealing with are far more than the garden variety jealous neighbors or religious fanatics.”

Here he paused. He was transfixed when he was hot upon a scent like this.

“Right! Tomorrow morning we will pay a visit to the Plaza Hotel first thing, to confirm Mr. Turner’s stay there. If possible we will also knock on the door of his doctor, and then, if that appointment rings true, we will get ourselves back up the Hudson as quickly as possible and see what we can do to help these folks who are fearing for their lives, but, I fear, not acting wisely.”

We parted for the night. For awhile I lay upon the sofa and tried to interest myself in a yellow-backed novel but my mind would not cooperate. Mary and I slept poorly and I am quite certain that Holmes did not sleep at all. I knew from my years of living with him that he would spend the entire night reading and rereading the documents that had been placed in our keeping until he had memorized every word of every page. The unsettled look of bewilderment was gone from his face. It was as if a veil had been parted and he had been given a vision not of the holiest of holies but of the most criminal and viscous sector of human existence, and he would not stop until he had faced it square on, and even endangered his own life in order to vanquish it.

In our haste the next morning we had breakfast in our rooms and then met Holmes in the lobby of the hotel. He had a cab waiting and helped load on the luggage in his haste to be on our way. With the roads not yet crowded the cabbie hustled his horse up Broadway all the way to Columbus Circle and then turned back east on 49th Street until he reached the massive Plaza Hotel at the corner of Fifth Avenue. The ornate lobby and the large front desk were crowded with guests that were checking out. Holmes, impatient as might be expected, turned to us and said, "Forgive me if I have to act like a New Yorker." He walked directly to the front desk, then promptly circled around behind it and into the front office. We could hear him speak loudly and imperiously, "I must see the manager immediately. This matter is urgent!"

A moment later he came back out with a young gentleman in a smart suit accompanying him. Holmes led the chap over to us and said, "Sir. I apologize for my terrible lack of manners but this is a matter of life and death. My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my colleague Dr. John Watson and his wife, Mrs. Watson."

He got no further. The young man broke into a wide smile and said loudly, "Hey. Wow. This is terrific. You're really

Sherlock Holmes? That's fantastic. Welcome to The Plaza, finest hotel in America. I love reading those stories about you. All the guys here do. And here you are. Hey. That's great!"

Holmes gave the chap a quick smile and went on. "Thank you for your interest. However today we are in the midst of a very serious case and we require your assistance. We need some information and we need it immediately. Can we count on your help?"

"Wow. You mean I get to help out Sherlock Holmes? Wow. That's fantastic. Does that mean I get to be in one of the stories, Doc?"

"That is always a possibility," I smiled back at him. "It depends of course on whether or not you can assist Mr. Holmes."

"Hey. Let's give it a shot Sherlock. What can we do for you?"

"I need to know whether or not a certain guest stayed here on the night of Wednesday June 3rd. A Mr. John Turner. Would you be willing to check your register and confirm that for us?"

"Whoa there Sherlock. This ain't the Hav-a-Nap Roach Hotel. This is The Plaza; most exclusive hotel in America. We have to guard to confidentiality our guests. I can't go telling you that, even if you are Sherlock Holmes. Real sorry, pal."

Holmes smiled at the fellow and said, "Since I am Sherlock Holmes then I am sure you will know that I will find this information out with or without your help. With your help I will find it out immediately. Without may take me a little longer. So what is it to be, sir?"

"Well . . .okay. Since you put it that way I suppose we could make a deal. I check our register and give you the information you need and when you write about this Doc, you tell your readers all over the world that The Plaza Hotel in New York City is the finest hotel in America with the best food, best staff, and most luxurious rooms anywhere on

earth. Deal? Shake on it? There ain't loopholes in a handshake, my daddy always said."

We shook on it.

"Your register please sir," said Holmes.

"No need. Old Johnny Turner comes here every second Wednesday so he can see his doctor next door every other Thursday morning. He's been doing it for the past seven years. So yes sir, he was here on the third of June. Mind you that was the last time he was here. We didn't see him on the seventeenth, nor on the first of July. He's still okay isn't he? He was looking pretty shaky last he was here."

I nodded and added, "I suppose any one of your waiters or maids could have told us the very same thing without the need of a deal. Correct, young man?"

"You can bet on it, Doc, but hey, a deal's a deal. Looking forward to reading about us in your story. You fellows and lady have a real good day now."

Dear reader: The Plaza Hotel in New York City is the finest hotel in America with the best food, best staff, and most luxurious rooms anywhere on earth.

"Very good," said Holmes, "and now to the doctor."

The office and treatment room of Doctor Williams of Central Park South was only a few doors to the west of The Plaza. We arrived just minutes before his office opened and waited for the doctor to show up. When he did I saw that he was an average looking chap, of average height and weight, almost bald, and well dressed in a fine morning suit, bright blue cravat and gleaming pearl stick pin. He looked surprised to see our little committee waiting outside his door.

"Good morning, Doctor Williams," said Holmes. "So sorry to disturb you first thing in the morning, but we have just been visiting with a patient of yours and are very deeply concerned for his health. We understand he has missed his past two appointments with you and he is deteriorating badly. If we could convince him to come and see you, is

there any possibility that you could arrange to see him this week?"

The doctor shrugged. "Which of my patients are you talking about?"

"Mr. John Turner of Tarrytown," continued Holmes. "We have just returned from being his guests and we are frightfully concerned about him. He has had a very rough past few weeks."

"Of course he has. What with his best friend and neighbor getting murdered and the son who did it gone mad. He was sitting in my office when he heard about it. The boy from the hotel ran in with an urgent telegram and he read it and got right up and walked out. I haven't heard from him since."

"Oh my," said Holmes, "that must have been terribly distressing not only for him but for you as well, sir. Terribly distressing."

The doctor paused and folded his arms. "It wasn't so much distressing for me as confusing. He read the telegram and then he went very pale. He just gasped 'Oh no. oh no' several times. Then he pushed himself up and just plain ordered me to help him get his clothes back on, he is quite handicapped these days, so I did and he just about ran hobbling out of the office. It wasn't until later in the day that I heard what had happened and then it all made sense. He was terribly upset, and I am sure he has gone nowhere but downhill health-wise since. If you can convince him to come back and see me anytime, I will find time in my schedule. He's a fine old fellow and I would hate to see his last few weeks of this life be more painful than they have to be."

"Indeed, doctor, we will," said Holmes. "Indeed we will do everything we can. He's a good man and we share your concern for him. Please do not let us hold you up from your practice any longer. Thank you so much for talking to us about our friend."

As soon as Doctor Williams had departed into his office and clinic Holmes turned to Mary and me and said, "I must

return immediately to Sleepy Hollow. There is evil afoot there and I am compelled to devise some sort of plan to protect the families who live there. I would be grateful for your accompanying me, but I am well aware of how much of your time I have already imposed on and would not in any way begrudge your returning to your home and your practice. You also must have patients waiting to see you . . . Doc.” He added the appellation with a smile. Before I could respond Mary spoke for both of us.

“My dear Sherlock.” She said with a warm smile. “You know perfectly well that there is nothing on earth that John Watson loves more than scampering across the countryside chasing down villains and scoundrels as the accomplice of Sherlock Holmes. The average Englishman who wants to be ill will still be that way when we return. So of course we will stay and help in any way we can. Won’t we darling?” I felt her slide her arm around my waist and then felt a firm hand with stylish finger nails put a distinct clasp on my left buttock. “Yes,” I chirped. “Of course. Count on us.”

“I knew I could,” said Holmes. “Now may I ask you to send a note back to our hotel and have them send our baggage on to Tarrytown by the earliest train. If we hurry we can still catch the morning express up the Hudson.”

9 UP THE RIVER

"Five dollars, cabbie," shouted Holmes, "if you can get us to the station in time for the 9:10 train up the river."

"Whoa! Hang on guv'nor," the driver shouted back. "We're at the post. We're off!"

The horse had a quick whip laid across its haunches and took off in a gallop down the stylish Fifth Avenue. Several policemen on foot shouted at us and more than one pedestrian cursed us as only a New Yorker is capable of doing, but we arrived at Grand Central Depot with just enough time to purchase our tickets and board the train. "Three return to Tarrytown," I said to the chap behind the ticket cage. "No!" shouted Holmes. "Make it return to Mattawan."

We ran along the platform to our cabin and boarded just as the conductor was giving the last call. Huffing and puffing we sat down.

"Mattawan?" I queried. "Back to the mad house?"

"Precisely," said Holmes. "It is time that Prince Hamlet came to his senses and helped us save him and his loved ones from becoming victims just as his father was."

The train pulled away and again we watched the buildings of New York City and then the banks of the great Hudson River pass by our windows.

"According to the train schedule, there is a twenty minute stop in Yonkers," Holmes observed. "My map shows me that the police station is located almost next door to the train station. As soon as we stop I am going to get off and run to the police on the off chance that I will find Detective Leverton on duty, and if he is I will do my best to persuade him to join us."

As soon as the train slowed to a stop in Yonkers Holmes opened the cabin door and ran across the platform and through the station. We waited, watching the clock. The first warning whistle was given. As the second one was sounding the cabin door opened and Sherlock Holmes entered followed by a tall, powerfully built police detective. He had removed his hat while running for the train and showed a fine head of wavy gray hair. He had full but trim sideburns and a neatly waxed moustache. His erect bearing led me to believe that he had military service in the past as well as his years on the police force. I thought that if I were to find myself in a tight spot in Sleepy Hollow I would not mind at all having this impressive chap next to me.

Holmes introduced us. "Detective Leverton, please meet my colleague Dr. Watson and his wife." I held out my hand which the detective took but not enthusiastically. He gave me a bit of a sideways nod and sat down. He did not look comfortable.

"It is against all protocol, Mr. Holmes, for me to rush away from my desk while on duty. I am doing this only because I have heard of you and your reputation, and I trust that you know what you are doing. But now you better give me much more information that you did at the station or I will be off this train at the next stop."

"A most reasonable request," replied Holmes. Piece by piece Sherlock Holmes laid out the entire case as he had come to understand it. He showed the detective whatever evidence we carried with us and justified each conclusion he had arrived at. The first and then the second whistle stops on the journey were passed and the detective made no move at all to depart.

When Holmes had finished the detective looked at him and said quietly, "If what you are saying is just your fantasy, then my job and your reputation will be on the line. If what you are telling me is true, then sir we are up against some of the most powerful men in New York State, and not only jobs

but our lives will be on the line. You are telling me that the Mayor of New York, the Boss of Tammany Hall, the Captain of Police of the Tenderloin District, and his leading lieutenant are all not only thoroughly corrupt, but in the past were murderers and swindlers, and that they have recently conspired to murder Charles McCarthy, and are planning to commit further murders if we do not stop them.”

“That is precisely what I am telling you, Detective Leverton,” replied Holmes, looking the officer directly in the eye. “I cannot compel you to join us and you are free to call us fools and get off at the next station.”

The tall gray-haired police officer said nothing for a moment and then a small smile appeared at the corners of his mouth. “Not much of any interest happens in Yorkers, you know. Downright boring at times for a policeman. Last time I was shot at was in April of 1865. Battle of Morrisville down in North Carolina. I was only a kid in my late teens just conscripted into the Union Army. Have to admit, most exciting day of my life. Scared as hell. Wouldn’t have missed it for the world. We’ll just have to see how this battle compares. The thought does kind of get the blood moving doesn’t it, Doc? You were army as well I’m thinking.”

“Medical corps. Afghanistan. Took one in the leg.” I nodded in return. I would not admit in front of my wife that I likewise missed the exhilaration of the battlefield. There is no other sensation known to man that compares. He held out his hand to me and I grasped it firmly. He said, “Well then, it’s time for two old soldiers to show we still got what it takes.”

At the Tarrytown station Mary got off the train with instructions to make arrangements for our hotel, and the baggage that would be following us on the next train. Holmes also asked her to try to arrange a confidential meeting with Miss Patience Moran as soon as we returned from Mattawan.

For the next hour Holmes quizzed Detective Leverton on all aspects of the corruption and extortion that permeated the entire State of New York. The detective was an honest officer who was enraged by the criminality of so many town councils, assemblymen and state senators, and his own fellow police officers. He told Holmes much about the goings on of Tammany Hall for the past one hundred years. Finally he said sadly, "You know, gentlemen, this corruption is like that monster in the mythology that I learned about way back in my school days. You know, the one where if you knock off one head another two grow in its place. Lord willing we may snap off a head or two in the battle ahead of us. But the monster is so big, we won't do more than put a pin prick in it."

"My good man," said Holmes, "you are entirely correct. But the alternative is to do nothing. It was, I believe, only the second labour of Hercules, but he finally conquered the monster of which you speak. We are only the opening salvo. We will have to trust that honest men will follow us and continue the fight that we will not be able to."

"Right you are, General," Leverton affirmed. "Lead on."

Getting past the Director of the Mattawan institution was not difficult at all. I brought him up to date on the monograph I was writing about the case and the excellent treatment that James McCarthy was receiving. Detective Leverton assumed an authority role and although he had no order from a judge to remove the patient from care he acted as if he did, and all of the staff meekly complied. Again we approached the young man as he was sitting outside, engrossed in a book. We came from behind him and he did not appear to sense our approach. Holmes moved quickly around in front of him and knelt down until he was looking the lad directly in the face. James made as if to leap up onto the bench and begin his madness routine, but Leverton placed his hands on the young man's shoulders and kept him in his seat.

James recovered himself and started to babble some nonsense verse. Holmes gave him a sharp slap across the face and he stopped in shocked silence and stared at Holmes.

"It won't do James," Holmes said with a tone a deep authority. "Do you see how easy it was for us to get to you? Do you really think that the Tammany villains could not do the same and more whenever they want? Use your head, young man. You are not safe here. And neither are your beloved Alice or her father or even your mother. They will kill them as well as you, just as they did your friend Michael and your father. Is that what you want to let happen? Is it? Now stop this nonsense and try to help us stop them. Get up. You're coming with us and we're going back to Sleepy Hollow and we will put an end to their evil. Now move. There is no time to spare."

I felt terribly sorry for the poor lad. I could see the vein in the side of his temple pounding and I knew that he was paralyzed with fear. He said nothing but Holmes nodded to us, and Leverton and I each took one of his arms and forcibly walked him out of the Institution and back through the village to the train station. I could feel his pulse throbbing as I held him by his upper arm.

The four of us sat on the station bench in silence waiting for the train. James leaned in my direction and in a trembling voice said, "Please. I really have to use the lavatory." The detective heard him and rose. "I'll look after this. Done this detail with prisoners more times than I can count. Be right back." If the boy had any thoughts of trying to make a run for it, those hopes were dashed as the policeman put his powerful arm through his and escorted him to the men's room.

When our train arrived Detective Leverton flashed his badge to the conductor and we are shown to a private cabin in the first class car. I introduced myself and reminded the young man that I was a doctor and attempted, in a friendly

way, to ask him questions but he refused to respond. He sat, ashen-faced, staring out the window until we arrived at Tarrytown.

Nothing more was said until we reached the station. As we got off the train I saw Mary waiting to meet us. Standing beside her was the tall young negress, Miss Patience Moran. As we approached them she walked directly to James and put her arms around him. He returned the embrace and they held each other closely. "It's going to be okay, Jimmy," she said. "It's going to be okay. It's good to have you back."

"Thanks Patti," he said. "It's good to be back . . . I hope."

The six of us walked in silence from the station to the hotel, where we found a small room off of the main parlor that was suitable for a confidential conversation.

Detective Leverton turned to Sherlock Holmes and said, "Mr. Holmes, as you have initiated this meeting I suggest you also initiate the questioning of these two young people."

Holmes nodded and began by looking directly at James and in a friendly but firm voice said, "It is time that we heard the truth about what happened on the night of June the third. I need to start with you, young man: did you murder your father?"

After a long silence we heard the words "No sir."

"Why then did you tell Detective Leverton you did?"

"I believed that they would kill me too, and that I would be safe if they locked me up."

"So you made a false confession and then pretended to have gone mad?"

"Yes sir."

"Was all that your idea or were you coerced into doing that by your friends?"

"It was my idea, sir, but I convinced my friends and Mr. Turner that I could pull it off, and so they went along with it."

"Lying to a police officer is a crime, you know that don't you?"

"Yes sir, but it's better than getting killed."

"I suppose you are right on that one, young man. So I assume that the police will overlook what you did as long as we know that you will now telling the truth. Will you agree to that, young man?"

"Yes sir."

"Well then, who killed your dad?"

"I don't know exactly sir but I believe that it was somebody connected to, or sent by people at Tammany Hall."

"And why would they do that?" Holmes continued quietly.

"Because of the play I wrote and we were going to perform. It portrayed them as murderers, swindlers, extortionists, and thieves," replied the lad.

"Well now, that is usually enough to get some folks angry, especially if they happen to be from the criminal class. But now tell me, what did happen on that night."

"I was in my room working on the script for the play when I heard a gunshot. I ran downstairs to my dad's office, saw him lying forward on his desk, saw a gun on his desk, and saw a man climbing out the window."

"And what did you do then?"

"I ran to my father, saw that he had been shot in the head, picked up the gun and ran to the window."

"What were you going to do?"

"I don't know. I wasn't thinking, only re-acting. I was screaming at him and tried to shoot at him."

"And did you?"

"The gun didn't fire. I'm not sure why. Next thing I knew Patti was standing beside me and she took the gun away from me." With this he turned to Miss Patricia and said, "Thanks Patti." She nodded back at him.

"At some time in the past year or two you discovered your father's memoir and read it, did you not?" asked Holmes of the young man. He said nothing but nodded his head.

"And you took it into your head that you would write a play about it and using the theater you would expose injustice, rally all the good citizens and put the bad fellows behind bars. Is that what you thought? But somehow they learned about your plans and were not happy about it. Is that correct?"

The lad nodded.

"Did they warn you to back off?"

He nodded again.

"But you thought that you were indestructible and so you confidently went right on with your plans for the play? Right?"

Another nod.

"It was rather naïve of you was it not?" pressed Holmes.

He nodded again and then whispered, "We believed that we were protected by the First Amendment. We never knew that they would be so evil, so awful. We never knew."

"And now you do. They first murdered your friend Michael in New Haven, and then they came for your father. Did he have any idea of what you and your theater pals were up to? Did he let you just carry on with it?"

"No. I told him about the play but not its real contents. We thought it would be a fun surprise and that he would be proud of us." There were tears streaming down the boy's face as he spoke.

"You saw the murderer from the window. Could you identify him?"

He shook his head.

"When Alice and her father and Bruce and Cameron arrived in the morning whose idea was it to call a prayer meeting?"

"Mine," he whispered.

"And that was when you concocted the plan for you to pretend you were mad so that they would lock you up in Mattawan, and you would confess to the murder, and you believed that doing so would protect you and keep them

from coming after Alice and the others. Is that what happened?"

"Yes. Alice's father said it was crazy but we were scared, and convinced him to let us try it."

"And Mr. Turner and Alice would go along with it and agree that you were angry at your father and prone to madness. How in the world did you get him to agree to such a desperate plan?"

"He told us that he was dying and that he would make sure everything was set right after his death, and that I would be able to get back to my mom and Alice and school."

"Did you know that he was going to die soon?" asked Holmes.

"No." Here he stopped for a minute, and his lower lip quivered. "Neither did Alice. It was . . . it was very painful. She was very upset. But we only had a few minutes left and we had to agree on something so that's what we decided. I was so scared that they would kill me and my friends. It was crazy but it was all we could think of."

Holmes put his hand out and covered the young man's trembling fingers. "Desperate times demand desperate measures. Under the circumstances it was far from the worst plan and quite convincingly carried off."

"You did a right good job as a mad man," said Leverton. "Had me fooled, you did."

James shrugged. "I played Hamlet during my senior year in high school. It was all I could remember. That and some memory verses from Sunday school."

"Have we learned all there is to know," asked Holmes. "Are any material facts missing?"

He shook his head. Stopped, and then looked at us again with tears in his eyes.

"Lucy," he said.

"Who is Lucy?" asked Holmes.

"One of the theater troupe. She was a classmate of Alice's at Radcliffe. She helped me write the script." He was

clenching his fists as he spoke. I placed my hand on his arm and quietly asked, "Can you tell me about what happened to her?"

He said nothing and his body was racked with sobs. With great difficulty he finally whispered, "He got to her first. He beat her. Badly. He broke her arm" He stopped, struggling again to gain control of himself and then in a nearly inaudible voice he said, "And then he raped her."

"Dear God Holmes," I said looking across at my friend, "Who are these monsters we are dealing with?"

Holmes said nothing. I watched him as he stared out the train window. I could see his eyes narrow into bullet points and his fists clench. He was enraged. I knew that he would not leave American soil until some villain paid for his crime.

Leverton spoke next to James. "It was not reported was it?"

"No sir."

"Lucy was terrified, and I am sure utterly humiliated," Leverton continued. The boy nodded as he held his face in his hands.

Leverton continued, "Told her parents she fell off her bicycle or something like that?" Again the boy nodded.

The detective looked at Holmes and me. "This is what happens all too often. These scum of the earth do their vile deeds and get away with it because the girl is too frightened to say anything, and understandably so. We'll have one of our nurses try to talk to her."

The boy raised his head. "She was only seventeen. She was tiny. She didn't weigh more than ninety pounds. What sort of creep would do something like that?" he dropped his head back into his hands.

Sherlock Holmes now turned his gaze towards Miss Patience Moran who had sat in silence for the past hour. "Miss Moran, you have been in a position to observe many of the most intimate events of the McCarthy household. We have been informed from other sources that the friendship

between Charles McCarthy and John Turner had become strained in recent years and that they were no longer as close to each other as they had been in the past. What do you say to that miss?"

Both Miss Patience and James looked at Holmes as if he had taken leave of his senses. "Sir," she said, "they were as alike as Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The staff used to say that the one couldn't decide on what color of socks to wear without consulting with the other. They were closer than most brothers. Isn't that right, Jimmy?" she said looking at James. He nodded.

"Yes but had Mr. McCarthy continued to be a Republican whilst Mr. Turner had begun to vote for the Democrats?"

Again Miss Patience gave us a look of disbelief. "Sir, you could have stuck hot pins into John Turner's eyeballs and he still would not have voted for a Democrat. Right, Jimmy?"

The young man shrugged. "I might have said hung, drawn and quartered. But yes."

Holmes continued. "Forgive me if I air an indelicate subject, but we are concerned here with very serious criminal acts." He paused, looked at Miss Patience who responded to his gaze with a shrug of her shoulders.

"I've worked every weekend in a hotel for the past two years. Not much that's indelicate that I haven't seen."

"Right. Very well then. There was also a story told to us that James McCarthy's sexual attraction was solely for other young men and that Alice Turner's was only to other young women. What do you say to that?"

"What!?" young James blurted out. Patience involuntarily laughed and then covered her mouth with her hand.

She regained her serious composure and replied, "Master James McCarthy and Miss Alice Turner displayed warm affection towards each other and as far as the staff could tell they had been in love with each other since they were children." Here she stopped and looked at James. "Oh very well then, sir, if you must know, they were as horny as billy

goats and we were always interrupting them behind the barn or in the hayloft kissing and fondling and groping at each other. Their parents told them they had to get married as soon as possible because the Bible says that it's better to marry than to burn with lust."

"Paaaatti" said James. "Thanks a lot."

"I am not going to lie in front of a police officer, Jimmy. Do you want me to say that you were really mad Prince Hamlet, or a homo, or that you were a normal hot-blooded college boy?"

James said nothing and just glared at the young woman, who beamed a smile back at him and said, "Because that is what you are, Jimmy, and we all know it."

He looked somewhat sheepish and smiled back at her but said nothing.

"And the friends of James and Alice who came to visit," said Holmes. "I believe that their names were Cameron and Bruce. Did they ever display any, I believe the term is, inclinations of sexual inversion?"

"Those two?" Miss Patience said. "Perversion would be the more appropriate word for their appetites. If I was serving them tea they would be forever looking down the front of my dress. I would give them a hard look and they would blush but then they would do it again the next time. They were just normal college boys sir."

"Permit me one final question," said Holmes. "And again forgive me if it seems to you to be insensitive. Is there any possibility, any whatsoever, that Mr. John Turner could have been the one who shot Charles McCarthy, escaped through the window and ran off?"

"Uncle John?" said James in disbelief. "Impossible. He's all crippled. The man who shot my father was tall and thin and fast on his feet. He jumped out the window and was out and behind the trees in a few seconds."

"You would agree with that statement, Miss Moran," asked Holmes.

"I did not see him until he was at the far end of the garden," she said. "But I could see that he was tall and thin and running very quickly."

Holmes nodded slowly and then looked over to Detective Leverton. "Sir," he said, "if you are in agreement, I believe that it would be acceptable to send Mr. James McCarthy along with Miss Moran back to McCarthy Manor. I have no fear of his turning fugitive, and I am quite certain that his mother will be overjoyed to have him arrive unexpectedly for dinner. Would you agree, Detective."

"Right sir," Detective Leverton replied. "I am quite alright with that sir."

"Ah, but we must demand that they return here, and bring Mrs. McCarthy with them, on the morrow at, shall we say, ten o'clock?" said Holmes.

"If that is what you wish sir," replied the detective. "It's quite alright with me." He turned to the two young people. "I will release you, James McCarthy, if I have your word that you will be back here tomorrow morning. Will you do that young man?"

"Yes sir. And I will have my mother come with us. She will be very happy to participate. I am sure of that, sir."

The young man and young woman rose and departed from the hotel. The detective turned to Sherlock Holmes and said, "This is all very well, Mr. Holmes. We now know who did not kill Charles McCarthy, but we are no closer to knowing who did, or to bringing the villain to justice."

"Ahh, yes. You are correct sir," replied Holmes. "I will need five more days to accomplish those tasks. I would, of course, welcome you to stay here with us in this pleasant little town beside the river but I fear that you are needed back at your post in Yonkers, are you not."

"Indeed I am sir."

"But would it be possible for you to return on Saturday? If you do then I would assure you that the villain will be delivered to you, most likely before midnight. And, of course,

also assure you that your prisoner will be here waiting for you, well guarded until then by his mother."

The big detective gave Sherlock long look with his eyebrows raised but then slowly nodded his head and offered just the hint of a smile. "I will be back here on Saturday, Mr. Holmes. Whatever it is you have up your sleeve I would not want to miss out on it."

He took his leave of Holmes, Mary and me , and departed in the direction of the train station.

"And may I dare to ask, my dear Holmes," I said. "Just what is it that you are going to do between now and Saturday that will bring this case to a satisfactory resolution?"

"The first thing we are going to do is going to happen this evening," he replied. "We are going to break into the house of Mr. John Turner and his daughter, Alice, and threaten to murder them."

"Holmes," I came close to shouting back at him. "That is preposterous. It is one thing to commit a crime to help solve a case if we were in England, but may I remind you that we are in America. We would be lynched before daybreak if we were apprehended!"

"Oh darling," Mary said in her familiar tone of loving impatience. "He's not going to hurt anyone. He only has to prove to them that they are not at all safe in their house even with their hired guards. And what better way to do so? I am rather disappointed that I am not being asked to join you."

"Thank you, my dear," said Holmes. "I suspect that your husband and I will find it difficult enough to be a convincing threat and that a refined English lady holding a revolver would render our little ruse an unbelievable farce. However, I promise that we will bring a reliable report of the events. And so my good doctor," he said turning to me. "We shall depart at dusk and make our way through Sleepy Hollow. You do have your service revolver with you, do you not?"

I nodded.

"I have one as well," said Holmes. "Although we have no need of bullets. Our mission is a peaceful one."

"Unless, of course," said Mary with an impish smile, "you meet someone unexpected after dark in Sleepy Hollow."

10 THE BREAK - IN

At dusk Holmes and I met at the door of the hotel and set out on our undercover mission. The moon had not yet risen and it would soon be pitch dark. The road through the village was well-traveled and easy enough to follow. As it entered the woods of Sleepy Hollow it sloped downhill until it reached the bridge over the stream, beneath which was a narrow but deep ravine dropping some thirty feet before the watercourse.

"You will remember," said Holmes, "that there is a foot path leading away from the road and directly to the McCarthy Manor."

"Ah yes. The hypotenuse."

"Precisely."

The path led us across a field and to the back of the house. Through the windows we glimpsed young James, his mother and Miss Patience sitting at their dining room table in what we could only imagine was an intense conversation. From there we sought out and found the path that led from the house of the one neighbor directly to that of the other; one that was well-worn by decades of neighborly visiting. By the time we reached the Turner estate all daylight had departed and we secreted ourselves behind one of the out-buildings at the back of the house.

"There were two armed guards on the porch," said Holmes. "Easily spotted by the glowing ends of their cigarettes. We shall wait here to determine the schedule of their rounds."

We waited in silence until we had heard the footsteps of the first guard and then, fifteen minutes later, those of the second. Once the second chap had returned to the front

porch Holmes whispered, "Now. They are using the summer kitchen behind the house and I would not be surprised if the door from it into the house has not even been locked."

He was right. In silence we opened the unlocked back door and found ourselves in the central kitchen. The staff had retired for the evening and we passed through to the dining room. There were no candles lit and we had to move very slowly to avoid bumping into chairs and other obstacles that would give away our presence. We could hear the voices of Mr. Turner and his daughter chatting in the parlor. Holmes took my wrist and indicated that I should stand on one side of the door leading to the hallway whilst he placed himself on the other. He lifted a saucer from a shelf, held it high above his head, and then let it fall to the floor with a resounding crash as the pieces scattered.

I heard voices of alarm from the parlor and heard both the rapid light footsteps of Miss Alice and the slower thuds and scuffling sounds of her father. Miss Alice stopped in the hallway to grasp a small candelabra and entered the dining room with her father right behind her. Upon entering she bent over to look at the fractured saucer with the result that her father's further entry into the room was blocked by her perfectly proportioned backside. At this point Holmes put one hand on Mr. Turner's shoulder and placed the revolver against his head, and in what I could only describe as an abominable attempt at a New York accent said, "Don't move old boy, if ya values your life."

John Turner froze in his tracks. Miss Alice immediately stood up straight whereupon I place my forearm around her lovely neck and in an equally dreadful attempt at an accent said, "Dat goes for you too, doll."

"How move over real quiet like to duh table and sit down," said Holmes. "We got some business to discuss with ya."

Both of our victims did as they were told.

“Put duh candles on duh table, baby doll,” I muttered menacingly in the ear of the trembling young woman. “And sits yourself down and keep your lip buttoned.” I had no idea whatsoever if that was the way American ruffians spoke when accosting their victims, but it was as close to the way they were portrayed in the theaters of the West End as I could remember.

Holmes said nothing for a moment and the stern voice of John Turner broke the silence. “Whatever it is you want you can take. If you do any harm to my daughter I will assure you that you will swing for it.”

“Indeed,” said Holmes in a distinctly London voice and he laid his unloaded revolver directly on the table in front of the old man and walked around to the other side of the table, sat down and faced him. I did likewise and sat beside Holmes. Before either of them could say anything Holmes spoke forcefully to them.

“If it was this easy for two amateurs to enter you house, and murder you had we been so inclined, do you really believe that the same men who murdered John Ferrier and Joseph Strangerson forty years ago in California, the same men who murdered young Michael DuPlessis, and your dearest friend, Charles McCarthy, and beat and raped Lucy O’Keefe could not do the same to you, to McCarthy’s widow, and to your daughter, and her fiancé? Do you really believe that sir? If you do then I assure you that you are sadly and dangerously mistaken.”

Mr. Turner said nothing and continued to stare angrily at Sherlock Holmes. Alice looked at the two of us and quietly asked “How did you know?”

Holmes gave her his quick and forced smile. “Elementary, my dear young lady. And please do not be offended if I suggest that you might take some acting lessons from your father, who is exceptionally skilled and does not require the use of tweezers.”

Even in the glow of the candlelight I could see a distinct blush on the lovely face of the young woman. Holmes continued his instructions to them.

"Your family sir, the McCarthys, and the theater friends of your daughter will not be safe until the evil corrupt men whose criminal pursuits you have threatened are brought to justice. That sir, is your only choice. I will explain to you how that will come to pass tomorrow morning at ten o'clock in the parlor of the Castle Hotel. Refreshments will be served and roles assigned. I look forward to a pleasant morning, and now we must bid you good-night."

Holmes rose, and I did likewise. "With your permission, sir," he said, "we will borrow one of your lamps to light our way home and take our leave by your front door. Until tomorrow morning. Good night, sir. Good night, Miss Alice."

Neither of them spoke. Holmes picked up the candelabra and we departed the room, leaving them in near complete darkness, with only the dim light from the hallway giving any illumination to the room. At the front door entrance Holmes picked up a lamp and used the flame from a candle to light it. We left the house, closing the door behind us.

"Good evening, gentlemen," Holmes said to the startled guards sitting on the front porch. "Keep up the fine work. I am sure that the master of the house will be eager to recommend your services."

This time we walked down the driveway and stuck to the road. My mind became occupied with other matters. "Holmes, you spoke of a plan that would bring the villains to justice. Pray tell what it might be as I see no possible course of action available to us."

"At ten o'clock tomorrow morning, my dear Watson, you will learn what it shall be," he replied, and then turning to me with a smile added, "Between now and then I will learn what it shall be."

11 THE PLAY'S THE THING

At ten o'clock the next morning a trepidatious group assembled in the hotel parlor. Mrs. Florence McCarthy, accompanied by James and Miss Patience, approached Holmes and, taking his one hand in both of hers, beamed a smile and thanked him for restoring her son to her.

"Madam, you are most welcome," Holmes replied warmly. "Our work is far from over however, and we must make sure that your family will no longer be in danger." To this she nodded and sat down between James and Miss Patience.

John Turner, hobbling in even greater discomfort than I had seen before, entered the room, supported by two canes and the arm of his daughter. He sat down close to Mrs. McCarthy, looked at her and in a quiet Scottish brogue said, "Forgive me Florence. This past month has very painful for you, and I am deeply sorry for inflicting it upon you. It was all we could think of at the time."

"Oh Johnny," the matronly lady replied smiling at her old friend, "you did what you had to do to protect the life of my son. What is there to forgive? It may not have been the most brilliant plan but it was quite ingenious. Of course you could not let me in on it. I would have spotted Jimmy's false confession and seen through his silly madness in a moment. And I would never have let him go off to the madhouse. I would have insisted he remain here and would have placed him in much greater danger. You did what you had to do for me as well and him." She leaned forward and laid her hand on his wrist as she spoke.

Inaudibly, the old fellow mouthed the words "Thank you" back to Mrs. McCarthy.

All eyes now turned to Sherlock Holmes. None of us, including Mary and me, had any idea of what his ingenious

mind had come up with.

"Most of the facts concerning this case," he began, "are now known to all of you who are present. There are some details of history that are still cloudy and I must rely on Mr. Turner to confirm these for us." He nodded towards John Turner who returned the nod.

"In the year 1849," continued Holmes, "John Turner and Charles McCarthy filed a claim in the California Gold Rush. The neighboring claim was filed by two other young men, John Ferrier and Joseph Strangerson, is that not correct sir?"

Mr. Turner nodded.

Holmes resumed the story. "The four of you became quite good friends even though the claim registered by you and Charles McCarthy turned out to be the more lucrative." Again he looked towards John Turner. He responded with a shrug of his large shoulders.

"Aye, you could say that. You could also say that we worked harder."

"Ah yes, that is more likely the truth," said Holmes. "After two years both claims had been worked out and were to be abandoned. Then just a month before all four of you had agreed to head back east Messrs Ferrier and Strangerson disappeared and four other men appeared on their site claiming that they had purchased the rights from your friends, and displayed a document showing the legal sale and purchase of the claim. Most likely it was forged." Here again he looked to Mr. Turner.

"For certain it was forged," said Turner. "But John and Joe had vanished and we could prove nothing."

"And then three weeks after that three other chaps from Philadelphia showed up saying that they had in turn purchased the claim from the previous owners and paid an outlandish sum. It would come to pass that they had been thoroughly swindled. Is that not correct sir?"

"Aye. 'Tis. The blackguards had salted their samples made it look as if the claim was still worth mining. Whoever

forged their ownership documents must also have given a falsified assay."

"Heavens," I interrupted. "Who would be so foolish to buy a claim without first inspecting it and assuring themselves that it was valid?"

Mr. Turner gave me a bit of a sideways look and a condescending smirk. "Any fool from Philadelphia. Possibly even one from London. The place was full of them. One born every minute, as we say over here."

"I suppose that the fools made the swindlers quite rich, did they not?" asked Holmes.

"They pocketed as much in two weeks as we had in two years."

"And your friends who had worked beside you, what became of them?" asked Holmes.

"At first we believed that they had sold their claim and gone home. It was odd for them to have done so without bidding us farewell. But it was California and many strange things happened. When we contacted their families later, trying to send our greetings, we were told that they had not been heard from for some time and we were asked if we knew what had happened to them. At that time on we suspected the worst."

"Did you inform any authorities of your suspicions?" asked Holmes.

Again the old fellow shrugged his powerful shoulders. "We had no evidence. Men came and went in California. Some were murdered. Some ran off to China with their Chinese brides. Some lost everything in the gambling dens of San Francisco. Charlie and I talked about it but decided there was nothing to be gained by upsetting the families based only on our suspicions. I let it pass, but Charlie took the time to put pen to paper and record everything that had happened while the details were fresh in our memories. Then he likewise let it pass and we got on with our new farms and our families."

"The men who you suspected of murder, however, reappeared, did they not?" asked Holmes.

Turner nodded. "Aye. That they did. One is now the mayor of New York, the second is the boss of Tammany Hall, the third the police captain of the Tenderloin, and the fourth his lieutenant. They all go by different names to what we knew them as, but Charlie and I have known who they are for at least the past ten years. They are the same murderers and swindlers they were forty years ago."

"Indeed they are," affirmed Holmes. Then turning to young James he said, "The rest of the story we know. You came upon your father's memoir, decided that you would turn it into a play and use the power of the spoken word and the stage to bring justice down upon the heads of those who so richly deserved it, never suspecting that the men you planned to publically accuse, four of the most powerful, corrupt and ruthless men in America, might respond with murder."

James nodded his head and stared at the floor in a look of deep humiliation.

"Young man," said Holmes, "I have nothing but respect and admiration for your courage and your moral outrage. My sentiments are the same as yours and my life is driven by the same desire to see justice done as you must have felt. The problem we now face is that your enemies have already gotten away with murdering two people and violating a defenseless young woman. It will not be easy to put these villains either on a gallows or behind bars." Here he paused. "But it can be done."

I suspect that Holmes was rather enjoying the dramatic effect of his statement and it took my intrepid wife to prick his little bubble. "Enough Sherlock," she said. "We can do without your theatrical efforts. Just tell us what you have in mind."

He smiled back at her. "Theatrical effect, you say? Ah, precisely. That is what I propose." With this he turned to

James and asked, "When we left you the first time in the mad house, what were the parting words the mad Prince Hamlet shouted to us?"

"I said 'The play's the thing, wherein you'll catch the conscience of the king.'"

"Indeed you did. And how very insightful you are for you have given us the means to put an end to these bloody, bawdy villains. These remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villains," said Holmes.

"Enough of the circumlocution," said Mary. "Where are you taking us?"

"I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play . . . please continue young Hamlet," he said looking directly at James.

James was silent for a moment and then recited: "I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play/Have by the very cunning of a scene/Be struck so to the soul that presently/They have proclaimed their malefactions;/ For murder though it have no tongue, will speak/ With most miraculous organ."

"You want us," said Mary, "to put on James's play. Is that what you are saying, Mr. William Shakespeare Holmes?"

"Exactly," said Holmes. "The news that the play was being planned compelled these men to commit two murders. The news that it is going ahead and will hold a preview this Saturday in Tarrytown will, I am quite certain, drive them to attempt murder again. I am also quite certain that the intended murder victims are all gathered in this room. So I am now appointing you, and whomever else of your young friends you may recruit, as the Irregular Theater Company of Sleepy Hollow. The curtain will open at eight o'clock on Saturday evening and we have work to do. The game is afoot, my friends."

"Mr. Holmes," said John Turner. "The game you are playing is a very dangerous one, against exceedingly vicious

men, and you are playing with the lives of other people. Are you quite sure that you wish to proceed?"

Holmes looked intently at the old man. "Sir, you are entirely correct. Forgive me if I made light of the course of action I am proposing. With great respect Mr. Turner, I only am recommending it to you because the alternative, the choice to hide out and wait for the enemy to act is, I fear, an infinitely more dangerous way to proceed. Would you not agree sir?"

The old man sighed and said, "I wish with all my heart that you were wrong, but I know in my mind that you are right. What do we have to do?"

"It is now late morning on Tuesday," said Holmes. "Our company is to present a play on Saturday evening. I confess to being a devoted patron of the theater but have no experience at all concerning direction and production of same. I will defer and suggest that the responsibility for taking charge of our efforts be given over to the most experienced amongst us. Mrs. McCarthy," he said, looking at the senior lady in the room, "you are the one who is best to organize this motley crew. I suggest that you take charge immediately and we will all do as you bid."

Alice immediately responded by clapping her hands and the rest of us joined in. The dear lady smiled at us and then spoke. "Under normal circumstances I would demur and plead exaggerated modesty but these are not normal circumstances and time is pressing and yes, Mr. Holmes, you are quite correct. I am the most qualified to take charge, not because of any vast experience on my part but only because of the utter lack of it in the rest of you. So very well, here then are your instructions:

"We shan't need to worry about costumes or sets. We can scrounge whatever we need from the back of our closets and our cellars. Each of you will look after his own appearance and do not go overboard with flamboyance. We are still

Presbyterians and will have to face the rest of the congregation the next morning.

“James, get to work re-writing the script. I have glanced over your first draft and, like everything else you have ever written, it needs updating and copious amounts of polishing. Have something ready for us by tomorrow evening. If you have to work through the night, so be it. If you want a life in the theater you may as well get used to not sleeping.

“Doctor and Mrs. Watson, you need to go into the village and find our Knox Presbyterian Church. Knock on the door of the manse and ask for Reverend Graham and tell him that the church hall is needed for this Saturday evening. It has a fine stage that the youngsters use every year for the Christmas pageant and if it is good enough for Mary and Joseph and Baby Jesus it will do us just fine, thank you. The good Reverend will pretend to be mortally offended but you will tell him that I sent you, and if that does not work then let him know, that you know, that in secret he reads every one of your stories over and over again and that he has just become part of a Sherlock Holmes mystery. He will be thrilled to death. His wife, who labors to look as homely as possible on Sunday mornings, is quite the pianist and fully capable of banging out ragtime with the best of them and will be positively giddy at the opportunity to dress up like a music hall floozy.

“Alice, send telegraphs off immediately to your friends from your Hasty Pudding Club and see how many of them will be able to be here by tomorrow afternoon. We will require a few more bodies on stage, preferably ones that are younger and better looking than we old folks. Pretty young faces sell tickets you know, so get as many of the attractive ones as you can.

“Mr. Holmes, if this farce is to come off then you had best get busy contacting the Press, and the public officials, and anyone else you want to attend, and tell them that it is by invitation only. The whole miserable bunch of them in

Manhattan are insufferable snobs and we may as well appeal to their vanity. Patience will give you the names addresses and positions of all the appropriate officials whose attendance we are in need of."

Finally she turned to Mr. Turner. "As for you Johnny , my old friend..."

"Yes, Florence, what will you set me to do, that I am sure will show no respect at all for my advanced age?"

"John," she said, "we will have to be practical and so I fear we shall have to look to you to round up as many Pinkertons and off-duty constables as can be found, and bribe all the weak-minded but strong-backed farm boys as you can muster, beer will do the job, and let them know they might have a fight on their hands on Saturday."

"In forty years I have never given a nickel to Simon and his miserable tavern, but if I have to buy rounds for the local militia I suppose I could spring for that this once," he said and gave a distinctly flirtatious wink back to Mrs. McCarthy.

*

Come Wednesday afternoon the entire Irregular Theater Company of Sleepy Hollow had assembled. It was to be a two act play with the first act set in the hills of California, amidst the wild days of the Gold Rush. The second was set in the Tenderloin District of the present day and took place primarily inside the Haymarket Tavern. Had Holmes and I known that it was so notorious we might not have visited it at all. On the other hand we might have skipped the theater and just gone there instead.

Our various parts were assigned to us. I was rather pleased to be assigned the role of His Worship, Mr. Hugh Grant, the Mayor of New York City, even if he was a thief and a scoundrel. At least it meant that I could pretend to be dignified. Holmes, being tall and thin was given the role of Lieutenant Crane and George, the big lump of a driver was conscripted to stand for police captain Clubber Williams. Reverend Graham, whose reaction had been exactly as

predicted by Mrs. McCarthy, got to play the Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall, Richard Croker. Young James, in addition to crafting the script, took the role of his father, Charles, some forty years earlier. Bruce and Cameron and one of their friends took on the roles of the other young Forty-Niners. The girls all enthusiastically wanted to be bar-maids, first in California and then in the Tenderloin. It was good that their parents were not there to object.

My beautiful wife, Mary, was given a role that James and Mrs. McCarthy insisted on referring to as "The Matron" although it was rather obvious that the more accurate name should have been "The Madam." Mary modestly acquiesced and pretended to accept the role with reluctance in the interest of the common good even though I could tell that inwardly she was pleased, and I must confess that it rather tickled my fancy as well as I was, perhaps in a less than completely pious manner, rather proud of her voluptuous figure, beautiful face and long blonde curls.

James presented us with our copies of the script. He and Alice had been up all night writing and re-writing it, although we assumed that there might have been an occasional smooch exchanged before they reach "The End". The word also went out that Mrs. Florence McCarthy had read the first draft they wrote, with all sorts of clanging and banging and flailing and running off in all directions, and declared it utterly dreadful.

She had sent him back to his desk with instructions to be more like Sophocles and less like Vaudeville. The script we were eventually presented with was cleverly written as a Greek tragedy, introduced by a sonorous Chorus - to be played by John Turner - and delivered by actors who mostly stood in place and relied on the power of the words and voices to move the audience.

There was to be a third act as well, a soliloquy to be recited by Miss Alice, and telling the terrible story of her

friend Lucy. The words were not yet decided upon and I could only imagine what might be in the works.

Holmes set himself the task of wordsmith, crafting screaming headlines and scandalous copy fit for the tabloids and respectable newspapers – there being one or two of them – of New York City. The advert I saw looked something like this:

SHAMEFUL SECRETS OF THE TENDERLOIN EXPOSED

MURDER, BRIBERY, DEEDS TOO DASTARDLY TO BE
NAMED, ALL UNCOVERED

OPENING OFF BROADWAY AFTER LABOR DAY

SEE IT FIRST. THE PREVIEW AND REHEARSAL OF THIS EXPLOSIVE NEW PLAY
WILL BE DELIVERED BY SKILLED ACTORS AT THE CHURCH HALL OF KNOX
PRESBYTERIAN IN TARRYTOWN ON SATURDAY EVENING. CURTAIN TIME IS EIGHT
O'CLOCK. BY INVITATION ONLY. APPLY BY TELEGRAM TO SLEEPY HOLLOW THEATER
COMPANY. SPACE IS LIMITED.

Various versions of this announcement were placed in all of the New York papers. Private telegrams were sent to the theater critics as well as to those few reporters and editors that Miss Patience assured us had not sold their souls to Tammany Hall, and could be trusted to stand with us in a fight against corruption and crime in high places.

Costumes were pieced together and a minimum of props provided. Our production would resemble not the outlandish musicals of Broadway but more those of three centuries ago that took place at the Globe on a bare wooden stage.

Miss Patience burned the midnight oil writing and re-writing letters to her favourite Assemblymen, and ministers, and lawyers, and bankers, and others that she knew only by name and reputation, imploring each of them to come to Tarrytown and join in our struggle for honest public service.

Over the next few days we stood on the stage and delivered our lines, as directed by Florence McCarthy. On Friday Alice Turner delivered her soliloquy for the first time. I

thought it was overly dramatic what with shaking her fist at the heavens, clasping her hands to her bosom and crying and wailing in despair. It was bordering on being pathetically maudlin. I watched Florence McCarthy as she watched Alice's performance, and had the sense that her apprehensions mirrored my own.

Quietly a handful of Pinkertons had entered the town and taken rooms at one of the small inns.

By Saturday supper time we all gathered at McCarthy Manor for something to eat but we had lost our appetites. Somehow we had entirely forgotten about being possible murder victims and were all overcome with good old-fashioned stage fright. The butterflies were dancing all over our stomachs. We made our way to our theater and gathered backstage giving each other occasional squeezes on the hand, telling each other to break a leg, and all in all being scared stiff. I thought to myself that it was as close to being ready to march into battle as I could remember from years ago in Afghanistan. The fear of forgetting my lines and making a fool of myself were every bit as terrifying as that of being a target for a Jezreel bullet, and maybe worse.

What I couldn't know about was what was happening in the village. One of the lads who was there in the middle of it told me the story the following day and as it was quite something I will pass it along to you as it was told to me.

"Well doctor," the lad told me, "we had got the word that all of us was to come into town and be prepared to do some fightin' 'cause there was to be a bunch of toughs comin' in from New York. They were comin' to break up the play that was on at the Church Hall and we didn't quite know why anyone would want to bother to do that, but this is our home town and we were ready to defend it an all. So we had about twenty of us lads from the town and the farms and we had shovels and pitchforks and the like and we were ready for anybody. And then we sees comin' off the train about twenty big fellows and they were lookin' powerful mean and nasty

and they was carryin' baseball bats and nightsticks and I wouldn't doubt but some of them like as had knives as well. And they walked like a line of infantry right up the road and right up to us. Now we're pretty big boys from workin' on the farm and none of us is ever afraid of anythin' that you might call work. If'n you're raised on the farm nothin' else ever seems like real work. But we're farmers, not fighters. And these city boys, they all looked like they was Irish and Eyetalian and Catholic and we knew that if'n it came to a donnybrook we was likely gets our heads beat in and walloped. So we did what good Americans always do when they is up against overwhelming bad guys." Here he stopped a flashed a wide toothy grin.

"And what was that?" I asked.

"Well sir, we called in the cavalry."

"The cavalry?"

"To be exact sir, the headless horsemen. Yes sir. One of our young chaps, Percy, he's in the band at school. He pulls out his bugle and sounds the cavalry charge. And then from behind us, all hidden they were on Park Street, come another fifteen of our boys from the farms and they are all on top of their draught horses. Big, and I mean really big Clydesdales, and Percherons, and enormous black Belgians. And they all have on their jackets from the high school band, or maybe cadets, or maybe their fathers from the war. And they all have them hiked up so that their heads are completely covered and they're lookin' out through the buttons. And don't they all look real terrifyin' sir. And us fellows on the road we opened our line and let the line of headless horsemen through. And now these city boys are facing a row of horses not one of which is under 2000 pounds. And in the middle of the line are Jerry and Kenny McDonald from the farm that's three miles up past Half-Way Tree. They have a team of the biggest Clydesdales you ever seen and they've teached them to do a trick and they do it every year at the county fair and always get applause for it.

They just say a word and both of the horses, they call them Leviathan and Behemoth, they rise up on their back legs and paw the air, and snort and whiney and come down with a thud and shake the ground and then they do it again and again.

“Well now, I tell you doc, those there city boys, they may have been tough and mean enough to look the devil in the eye and still spit, but that ain’t nothin’ compared to looking right up at the underside of a Clydesdale’s big foot and thinkin’ what it might feel like if’n it crashed down on your head and a headless horseman at the reins. Well the poor chaps what was standin’ right in front of Leviathan and Behemoth I swear they just about pooped their pants, they did. They backed up a few steps and our line moved forward. And then we did it again. If’n we’d a kept it up we mighta marched them right back to the train station but then Simon the barkeep come out and shouts at all of us and he says,

‘So, are you all going keep standin’ there all night while there are drinks on the house, five pints each if you can do it and my tavern is empty and waitin’ for all of yous? But if I hear so much as one mean word then every last one of you is cut off. Now what’ll it be, some of you is just standin’ and lookin’ at the horses’ hooves, and the rest of yous – that was us Tarrytown boys he meant – are lookin’ at the horses’ ass. And with that we all laughed and we looked at the city boys and they looked at us and we all marched over to Simon’s tavern and just started drinkin’ and tellin’ lies and swappin’ stories about the Headless Horseman and weren’t we havin’ just a real good time and Simon he keeps the ale comin’ and none of us paid a cent. Best night we had in a long time. They was real fun fellows and then they had to catch the train back to the city and then Simon sent us all home. A good time was had by all, Doc, a good time by all, for sure.”

While the donnybrook-that-wasn’t was taking place in the centre of the town we frightened thespians gathered to give our performance. To my surprise and satisfaction we

watched as well over a hundred people entered the church hall, many of them dressed well beyond the means and taste of the good citizens of Tarrytown. One young man with a barrel chest, walrus moustache, and gold-rimmed spectacles was rather on the loud side, patting everyone on the back and pumping hands as he worked the crowd. Miss Patience was standing next to me and whispered "That's Theodore Roosevelt. I wrote to him and asked him to come."

"Well my dear," I said. "Then you must introduce yourself to him. I am quite certain he will remember your name. He seems to know the name of everyone else who is here. Go and say hello to him."

She looked terror stricken. "Oh Doctor Watson, I wouldn't dare. I'm just a servant girl and he's going to be the Governor of New York State someday. I couldn't just walk up to him."

One of the advantages to being a doctor is that you have seen them all, the lowliest peasant to the dukes and earls of the land, standing naked in front of you with all their wrinkles and bulges and blemishes, and poked and prodded into every one of their orifices. It tends to profound convictions of democracy and lack of any inhibitions towards the high and mighty. So I took young Miss Patience by the arm and marched her over to her hero and introduced her. Mr. Roosevelt knew who she was instantly and began to chat with her as if she was then only person in the entire room and he was interested in nothing else on earth but her opinions. I discreetly left them and looked over the rest of the incoming audience. There were several men in clerical collars, some men smartly dressed who I assumed were from the business district and reform minded, and some who were dressed rather shabbily but clutching notepads and scribbling as they interviewed each other. I caught a glimpse of the large, powerful body of Detective Leverton standing near the back of the hall and trying not to look conspicuous.

At seven minutes past eight the church bell was rung and the audience ceased chatting.

John Turner appeared from behind the curtain and led off with an introductory oration all given *basso profundo* in a gravelly Aberdeen brogue. During the first act, set in the California Gold Rush, the characters were all given false names and it was clear that the bad guys had been guilty of forgery, and swindling, and fraud and, most likely murder. The audience appeared puzzled as they had obviously heard countless tales of wild times in California and what they were seeing was nothing new.

The opening scene of the second act revealed the identity of the villains from the first act and, even though they were not named by their true names, everybody knew who those evil characters had become. You could feel the tension rise in the audience as they became aware that they were witnessing an unprecedented attack on the most powerful and most utterly corrupt public officials in the city. It was unspoken but everyone in the audience knew that there would be hell to pay for what was taking place on stage.

The second act included several well-chosen examples of bribery and extortion, beating and rewards, greased palms and immoral activities. The college boys from Harvard's Hasty Pudding Club and the girls from Radcliffe gave remarkable performances. The situations portrayed and the language they used pushed right up to the limit of what could be acted on stage in America. The reporters scribbled furiously, the clergymen shook their heads, and the toffs and poseurs all postured looks of nonchalance. No one however gave any evidence of disbelieving what they were seeing on stage. The occasional nodding head told me that they knew that the accusations being made in front of them were the truth.

The final scene was to be Alice Turner's soliloquy and I quietly stood in the left wing behind the leg curtain so I

could watch her, hoping that she would resist the temptation to imitate Sarah Bernhardt. To my surprise the young woman who walked into center stage was not Alice. It was another young woman I had never seen before. She was petite but strikingly beautiful with long red hair and flawless pale skin. Her right arm was in a plaster cast and supported by a sling. She walked with a limp. Her opening words to the audience were:

“Your playbill informs you that the role of Lucy O’Keefe is to be played by Alice Turner. A change has been made. The role of Lucy O’Keefe will be played by Lucy O’Keefe. I am Lucy O’Keefe.”

And then, with no dramatic gestures and seldom raising her voice beyond a quiet steady tone she told her story. It began on an evening three weeks ago as she was sitting by the sea near her home in New Rochelle, writing letters and poetry. As she departed the beach after sunset she was forcefully grabbed by a man dressed in dark clothing. She then described slowly and in exact terrible detail everything that had been done to her. She told of how her clothes had been ripped from her body, exposing her private parts, and how she had been beaten in the face with a nightstick. She lifted her upper lip to show the gap in her beautiful smile where two of her teeth had been knocked out. And then in painful detail, naming each anatomical part of her body and that of her assailant, she described her violation.

It is a rare occasion when an audience of New Yorkers are so stricken that they seem to cease breathing, yet that is what took place. The room listened in complete painful silence. I could almost hear the silent screams from some of the women present shouting “Please no more. It is unbearable.” But there was more. And more.

Standing beside me in the wing was a man of average height and a full head of red hair. His profile said that he was the father of the young woman on stage. I observed tears streaming down his face and could only imagine how a

father's heart must feel as he watched his daughter on stage courageously telling her story.

Lucy concluded her story and looked silently across the audience and said, "I walked, holding my bicycle with one hand as my other arm was broken. I found the public lavatory by the beach and washed my body as best I could. Then I went home and lied to my mother and father about what had happened. I am not lying to you. I have told you the truth. The truth will set you free." She walked off the stage and collapsed into her father's arms.

There was not a sound from the audience. Not a whisper. John Turner emerged from the back curtain and in his role as the Chorus challenged the audience to act upon what they had heard, reminding them that "Faith without works is dead."

The front curtain closed and the audience erupted into applause. We quickly took our bows. The last on to appear on stage was Lucy O'Keefe, and she did so holding onto her father's arm. As she stepped forward to receive her applause the entire audience rose and gave a sustained ovation. There were no shouts or whistles. Merely continuing applause. They were still applauding when Lucy bowed one last time and turned and left the stage.

Most of the audience remained in the hall after the performance had ended. Word was brought to us of the stand-off in the village and I watched Holmes and Detective Leverton conferring. They motioned for Mary and me as well as Mrs. McCarthy and Mr. Turner to join their conversation. "One of the Detective's men has reported seeing a man who matched the description of the killer," said Holmes. "My suggestion is that all of the young people be removed and sent to the same inn where the Pinkertons are staying. The rest of us will be seen to depart for the McCarthy Manor, where the killer struck last month. I fully expect that he will act in the same manner tonight."

Mr. Turner spoke quietly and said, "I fear I am far too old a frail for any more performances this evening and will fall asleep at whatever post I am given. I shall return to my home and leave the final battle to those who have the energy to take up the fight." He left us and walked haltingly towards his carriage. The rest of us nodded our assent and returned to mingling amongst the chattering members of the audience. Miss Patience approached us a few minutes later and said, "Mr. Roosevelt has requested that we meet him for a lunch meeting in the city at noon on Monday. He wishes to introduce us to some people he says can help us."

"Please tell him that we will be more than happy to join him," I replied.

"And Patience, my dear," said Mary, "I do believe you may have found your calling. Mr. Roosevelt could use your help." The girl looked down in shy embarrassment, then raised her head and broke into a wide and gleaming smile, and made her way back to the side of her hero.

In the dark we rode in carriages back to the Manor. Detective Leverton and his men were waiting for us there, having made their way in secrecy from the village. Holmes called us together in the hallway.

"Our adversaries, who have spies in every corner of the land, have no doubt learned that I am present and have turned myself, if I may say, into their worst enemy. Therefore I shall make myself a target for their machinations."

"You do not have to be the hero, Mr. Holmes," said Detective Leverton. "We are all prepared to play whatever role we are called upon to perform."

"Ah, my good man, you generously overestimate my bravery. I have no intention of playing the role myself. It will be played tonight by my understudy." He then smiled at Mrs. McCarthy. She walked towards the servants' wing and returned a minute later bearing a life-size leather and cloth dummy of approximately the size and shape of the body of Sherlock Holmes, covered in a silk dressing gown and

adorned with a wig. A capable seamstress had stitched the features of a face and, from a modest distance, it could pass as a tall thin English visitor.

"Meet 'Sherlock,'" said Mrs. McCarthy with a smile. "If he ends up with a few bullet holes in him I expect he'll still be the best scarecrow in the county."

"What do you think Watson? Was I just given a compliment?" said Holmes with a pretense look of bewilderment.

"Why, of course, Holmes. Scaring off all forms of birds, not to say the village children, and protecting the harvest is a most honorable role and I can think of none who could do it better."

We shared a round of nervous laughter and then went to our various stations. Detective Leverton had placed three of his men in the yard outside, with instructions to stay hidden and not to obstruct any intruder, but to give a signal as soon as our expected visitor approached. Mary and Florence were to sit and chat over tea in the parlor, with two other men hidden behind the furniture. Holmes, Leverton, one more of Leverton's men and I all prepared to hide ourselves in the library behind curtains and bookcases. The Detective quietly spoke to us. "From my years of police work, gentlemen, permit me to give you the best advice I can offer."

"Certainly, officer," I replied. "And what may that be?"

"We could be here for several hours. I advise you to make a quick visit to the lavatory. What we call a stakeout can be very painful if you don't." He flashed a smile and clapped me on the upper arm. I heeded his advice.

'Sherlock' was placed behind the desk. Charles McCarthy had indulged himself in an excellent chair that had a solid wooden back and the capacity of swivel and tilt. Holmes had rigged up some fishing line to it and placed the ends of the lines in our hands. Every few minutes one of us would give a tug and cause 'Sherlock' to move slightly. We assumed our positions and waited, and waited.

A full two hours passed with no sign of a visitor. The ladies in the parlor put out the lamps and retired to the bedrooms upstairs, followed by their guards, who took hidden positions in the hallways. I had begun to doubt that Holmes's plan was going to work. The clock in the hall had struck two o'clock when a signal, a low, quiet call of "Cooee", like a small owl, was heard from the yard. Through a tiny opening between the curtains that I was hiding behind I could see the dark shape of a man appear on the far side of the window. He stood motionless and looked into the room for a full fifteen minutes, staring at the dummy that was sitting in the chair with his back to the window. Every minute or two one of us gave a small tug on our line and 'Sherlock' obliged us by moving ever so slightly.

Suddenly the window opened. The killer leapt through it and in a split second unloaded two shots from his gun into the back of the dummy's head. As soon as we heard the shots we all jumped from our positions and Detective Leverton shouted, "Halt in the name of the law! Put down your gun and raise your hands in the air! You are under arrest!"

The killer long gaunt face betrayed his bewilderment, followed by a steely glare of anger. He raised his hands slowly.

"I said drop you gun, now drop it or we will fire on you," said the Detective.

The killer nodded his head but instead of dropping the gun he fired two shots towards the ceiling. They struck the chandelier and sent shards of glass and burning candle flying in all directions. In that moment he turned and dove back out of the window. Leverton rushed across the room, leaned out the window and shouted, "Stop him!" I could hear his men responding and shouting at the killer to stop.

All of now were gathered at the window and we could catch a glimpse of the killer running quickly, followed by the police officers. He had a good lead on them and was a very

fast runner. A moment later we heard the sound of hoof beats galloping away in the direction of Sleepy Hollow.

I listened and heard the “clippita, clippita, clippita . . .” sound fade in the distance. But the sound stopped abruptly and was followed by the most terrifying scream. It was short and loud and set the hair of my head and neck on end.

“Merciful heavens,” I gasped. “What was that?”

“Some torches! Bring some torches,” shouted Holmes. He ran out into the hallway and shouted his order up the stairway. Mrs. McCarthy appeared from the bedroom in her nightdress and elderly though she was bounded down the stairs and into the kitchen. She returned momentarily bearing a handful of torches which Holmes, the Detective and I lit. We took off on the run across the yard, and followed the footpath leading to Sleepy Hollow.

Partway there we encountered a horse, bearing a saddle but no rider. The animal was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck and a head like a hammer; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral; but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. It was foaming at the mouth and greatly agitated.

“Something has spooked that poor mare,” said Leverton as it made our way past it. “Never seen a horse looking so spooked.”

We reached the edge of Sleepy Hollow and followed the path to the place where it met the road just before the bridge over the ravine. Holmes held his hand in the air. “Stop please, gentlemen,” he said. “We have been following the tracks of that poor mare as she galloped to this point. You can see that she stopped here. There is a cluster of tracks, some of which are deeply cut into the earth. Then she turned around and began her disturbed walk back out of the hollow to the place we met her. Her rider must have leapt or been thrown off of her at this place.”

Sleepy Hollow was pitch dark except for the light from our torches. Holmes was peering down into the ravine and

turned to the rest of us. "The branches here are broken. The rider has either climbed or been thrown down the embankment."

He continued to work his way down towards the stream bed. We followed him. When he reached the bottom he looked back up at Leverton and me. "I believe that we have found our killer."

I stumbled and slid the rest of the way until I was standing beside Holmes at the edge of the chattering stream. In front of me was a man's body. He was tall and thin and dressed entirely in black. His face was buried in the stream and his head was twisted in a ghastly way that could only have resulted from a broken neck. Blood was still seeping from the top of his head, which was lying against a large rounded rock that protruded from the water. Leverton rolled the body over so that the corpse was looking directly at us. The facial features were contorted and twisted in a look of unspeakable terror. The mouth was open, the eyes were inhumanly wide, and the tongue was bitten almost through. Whatever the last thing this man had seen in his life had been a vision of something horrific beyond imagining.

The Detective searched through the pockets and retrieved a wallet.

"Well Mr. Holmes," he said. "It would appear that there are now only three villains from the Gold Rush to bring to justice. This is Lieutenant Isaac Crane of District 31 of the New York Police Department. The dreaded Officer Icky has gone to meet his maker."

Holmes bent over and lowered his torch to get a closer look and as he did so I let out an involuntary shriek of fright.

"Good heavens, Watson, what is it?" Holmes shouted back as he stood up and looked over at me.

I felt embarrassed and sheepish. "Awfully sorry Holmes. Sorry Detective. It is just that as the light from your torch passed across the rock that he smashed his head against,

the shadows took on a ghastly appearance. Move your torch in the same arc as you just did a moment ago and you will see what I mean."

Holmes slowly lifted his torch and the three of us fixed our gaze on the rock. At a certain point part way through the arc the shadows formed by the configuration of the rock's surface came together in such a way as to look like the face of a jack-o-lantern - a most hideous one, with slits for eyes and a leering grin. Holmes held his torch steady and just the right place and the three of us exchanged glances with each other.

"Well now," said Leverton, "maybe this place is haunted after all." He gave a forced chuckle.

Then a sound was heard that caused our hearts to stop and our blood to run cold. From the top of the embankment we heard the snort and deep-throated whiney of a horse, a very large horse. We froze and looked up. In what little light that made it to the top of the bank I could make out the shadow of a large black object. Then it moved. We heard another snort, the pawing of a hoof on the ground and then thundering hoof beats as the beast galloped off down the road and into the night. We neither moved nor spoke until the hoof beats had faded and silence returned. Without speaking we made our way back to the top of the ravine. Leverton knelt down and held his torch close to the ground.

He looked up at Sherlock Holmes and spoke in a whisper.

"Mr. Holmes. These are the hoof prints of a gigantic stallion."

12 TAMMANY HALL

To this day neither Holmes nor I have ever said a word to each other concerning the apparition we experienced that night. I am a doctor and a man of science, and give no quarter for superstition. Holmes is the most complete skeptic I have ever met and is bound by the dictates of logic and deduction alone. Yet I suspect that while both of us drew our own conclusions about what happened that night, neither has been entirely willing to discard the belief that there may be principalities and powers at work that visit justice upon evil doers in way that science can never explain. If men of science are to hold to a secret superstition, that one is at least forgivable.

Whatever the cause of the events of that night, the issues that gave rise to the case were far from being resolved. Dead men tell no tales. And so it was that we could wring no further information from Icky Crane. His obituary in the papers was cryptic and noted only that he had tragically fallen from a horse. Police Captain Williams was quoted as saying that he was an outstanding and loyal officer of the police department and would be greatly missed.

The Sunday New York papers did, however, devote significant space to the preview of the play that was performed in Tarrytown before an invitation-only audience. Those papers that were in league with Tammany Hall predictably pilloried and ridiculed all aspects of the production, claiming that it was nothing more than an amateurish effort by some puritanical reformers who had nothing better to do to than promote their own self-interests by slandering the good names of the city's police and its democratically elected leaders. Others newspapers, those that maintained their independence from the Tammany

machine, were unrestrained in their praise for the courage of the writers and actors. They went much farther than even our Irregular Theater Troup dared and named several public officials and directly accused them of living off of bribery and corruption.

There was one aspect only on which all of the press agreed. The theater critics universally praised the breathtaking soliloquy of Miss Lucy O'Keefe. Superlatives tumbled across the columns of print, and predictions of her future as Lady Macbeth, or Gertrude, or Desdemona, or Juliet were ubiquitous.

On Monday morning we packed our bags and bid goodbye to our hosts. Mrs. McCarthy embraced the three of us warmly and thanked us yet again. James and Alice, standing arm in arm, and their college friends thanked us and presented us with several copies of *The Strand* and requested that they be signed by Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson. Alice apologized for her father's absence, saying that the intense events of the past few days had laid him very low, but that he sent along a gift that he thought would be appropriate. She presented us each with a beautiful leather-bound copy of *The Stories of Washington Irving*. He had inscribed the flyleaf of each of them with the same note and it ran:

May the events that took place in Sleepy Hollow continue to live in your memory and our gratitude,

and signed by John Turner.

Mary and I were both disappointed that Patience Moran did not appear. We were further surprised to hear that she had given her notice on Sunday afternoon and departed from the McCarthy household. Mrs. McCarthy spoke only kind words about her and said that she had gone to seek her fortune with the blessing of all who knew her.

As we boarded the train to the city each of us purchased one of the morning newspapers. The headlines of all three papers screamed about a sermon that had been preached

the day before from the pulpit of Madison Square Presbyterian Church by a Rev. Charles Parkhurst. From the description of the clergyman I recognized him as one of those who had attended the play in Tarrytown. *The Sun*, the most reformist of all the papers, printed the entire text of his sermon and in it he thundered in the strongest language against the crime and corruption that pervaded the politics and police force of New York City. Every biblical epithet I knew and a few I had never heard before were used to decry the evil web of the police, city hall, organized crime and Tammany Hall. Our intrepid actors may have started a ball rolling, or, more likely, they had become a part of a much larger movement of social reform that was slowly gathering force and would eventually become unstoppable.

Having mused on the events of the past few days for a couple of hours as we traveled back into New York City I was brought back to more pressing matters by our arrival at Grand Central Depot. There we hailed a cab and once again made out way to the Plaza Hotel. This time, however, we were in no great hurry and took the more pleasant route up the splendid divided boulevard of Park Avenue. On arrival at the Plaza I noticed the same manager standing behind the front desk. He recognized us and immediately welcomed us effusively. I was reticent to engage in conversation, still remembering the handshake deal struck on our last visit, but the clever young chap again got the better of us.

“Doctor and Mrs. Watson, and the great detective Sherlock Holmes: surely you are not contemplating staying anywhere else while you are on this blessed isle. Allow me to offer you a suite of complementary rooms for up the three nights. All I ask in return, and I am sure you will think it fair, is that in every story you set in America you remind your readers that the Plaza Hotel is . . .”

How could we refuse. And so dear reader, allow me to inform you that the Plaza Hotel is . . . but then I have already told you that.

Mr. Roosevelt had reserved a large table in the palatial Oak Room of the hotel and the maitre'd led us towards it. There were four men already seated, as well as an attractive young colored woman who I immediately recognized as Patience Moran. The men stood to greet us and shake hands as Mr. Roosevelt introduced everyone.

In a voice that was several decibels louder than necessary he first gestured to Miss Patience and said, "You folks already know my new assistant clerk, Patti Moran. Indeed it was the events in Tarrytown that has brought this wonderful young woman to my attention. And this here is Reverend Parkhurst. He just made himself famous, loved and respected by some in this town and hated by others because of the sermon he gave yesterday. And I could not be prouder of him. And this here is our State Senator Clarence Lexow, as fine a reform-minded senator as you can find in this great state. And this here fellow . . ."

He had pointed to a well-dressed gentleman in his fifties who interrupted Mr. Roosevelt's performance and snapped, "For God's sake Roosevelt, you're not campaigning for office. Enough of the politicking, get down to business. We haven't all day."

With this he extended his hand to us and said, "J.P. Morgan. Welcome to New York. We appreciate all you have done for us already. Connie Vanderbilt will be joining us shortly. Now Teddy, what are we here for?"

Theodore Roosevelt nodded and smiled at the banker and proceeded to recount the events of the past month, including the writing of the play, the murders of both the young Michael DuPlessis and of Charles McCarthy and, briefly and discretely, the violation of Lucy O'Keefe. Patience Moran scribbled furiously and I assumed that she had developed exceptional skill in shorthand as well as having the mind and making of an excellent lawyer and detective. Roosevelt continued without pausing for a breath and summarized some of the minister's sermon as it had

appeared in the papers, then announced that he would be seeking the job of Commissioner of Police of New York City the following year. He said that he had recruited the famous Sherlock Holmes as consulting detective, and that Mr. Holmes would be advising him on all matters and means of dealing with the criminal underworld.

I had not heard of Holmes's prestigious new position and judging by the look on his face, neither had he. Throughout a gastronomically perfect lunch, served efficiently and with impeccable manners by the staff of the Oak Room, Theodore Roosevelt held forth on one aspect after another of the problems facing the city, the state and the nation, adding to each topic the steps he was going to take to fix them. Our final guest arrived part way through the meal and we were introduced to Cornelius Vanderbilt, who was also strongly of a reform persuasion.

Sherlock Holmes listened attentively but I gathered that he was not about to be bullied into any job in America that he himself had not decided to pursue. During the lull as dessert was served he spoke up. "Mr. Roosevelt, my good man, your grand plans and intentions are most admirable. However my first responsibility here is to my client and her family. They are still in peril and none of your wonderful intentions for the future are going to change that. Pray tell what is it that you propose to do today to ensure their safety?"

"Right you are sir. And immediately after lunch you and I are going to make a trip downtown to Tammany Hall and get those boys down there straightened out."

As soon as lunch was over Roosevelt smiled graciously at the rest of us and said, "Patti, I will meet up with you later in my office. Doctor and Mrs. Watson, with your permission I am going to shanghai this famous detective friend of yours and we are going to pay a visit downtown and give those boys at Tammany Hall a firm kick in their backsides. I will send him back to you safe and sound in a couple of hours, and in the

meanwhile may I encourage the two of you to enjoy the greatest city on earth."

A large private carriage had appeared at the hotel portico. The driver opened the door for Holmes and Roosevelt, and then we watched as four large, fit and well-dressed men followed them and were seated.

I turned to my wife and said, "It would appear that outspoken politicians in this great city are advised to have Pinkertons in tow."

"The two tall ones were in Tarrytown on Saturday evening. It is a good thing for Mr. Roosevelt that he is rich enough to afford to be in American politics."

For the rest of the afternoon we strolled through Central Park, past the Sheep Meadow to the great reservoir and back, by which time Sherlock Holmes had returned to the Plaza Hotel.

"Do tell, Holmes," said I, "you do not appear to have been shot or otherwise beaten for your impudence. What did you and the enthusiastic Mr. Roosevelt manage to accomplish."

"We engaged," answered Holmes, "in bare knuckle American-style politics and it was most fascinating to observe, most fascinating indeed. The fine and charitable Society of St. Tammany is now situated in a large hall on Fourteenth Street and the folks who are in charge there are, as you suggested, my dear Watson, making a very pretty penny on all sorts of greed and corruption. While Mr. Roosevelt may be a little too much on the boisterous side for English taste he is certainly not lacking in courage and bravado. Mind you one's courage is reasonably improved when one is accompanied by four large and armed Pinkertons. Nevertheless he strode past the doorkeepers, past the secretaries and into the head office in which sat the Grand Sachem of the Society, the gentleman named Richard Croker, of whom you already know much more than he would wish you knew.

“Roosevelt leaned over the man’s desk, placed his face no more than a foot away, and barked out his orders. He placed a list with the names of the family and friends of the McCarthys and the Turners and demanded not only that these be not touched but that they be protected from all possible harm regardless of from what quarter it came. To which the Grand Sachem replied, ‘And why would I bother doing that?’

“Roosevelt reminded Mr. Croker that there were over ten million dollars worth of federal funds scheduled to flow from Washington to New York City in the next three months and that he, as a good friend and confidant of President Harrison, and as a member of the Civil Service Commission of the United States of America, would see to it that not one penny would be controlled by any democrat, any union, and most certainly not by Tammany Hall unless he made sure that young James, and Alice and their families were kept from all mishaps.

“And with that he turned and marched back out of the hall and we got back into his carriage, along with the Pinkertons, of course. He then turned to me and said, ‘They’ll all be just fine now. Croker knows what side his bread is buttered on.’ From that point on he quizzed me most intensely about my insights on the control of crime, and policing, and the enactment of laws, and such and so forth. The man’s mind is an absolute glutton for information and advice, and his personality most demanding.”

“Yes, Holmes,” I said. “And what advice may I ask did you give him?”

Holmes smiled. “I suggested that while it was quite acceptable for a successful police commissioner and future governor to carry a big stick, he would go far if he also learned to speak softly.”

EPILOGUE

It is now a decade since the events of *The Hudson Valley Mystery* transpired and I thought it considerate of me to bring the reader up to date on the many people and places that were part of this fascinating set of events.

James and Alice did not pursue a life in the theater or in the arts, as had been their dream. Instead they amalgamated the two already large and prosperous farms that had been built by their respective fathers, and they are now the largest keepers of Aberdeen Angus cattle in New York State. They are experts not on Moliere or Shakespeare but on the selective insemination of cows for increased beef production, the castrating of bulls, and all matters related to the national and international markets of feed grain. They wisely heeded their parents' advice and got married rather than continuing to burn with lust. Already they are the proud parents of four children and you may draw whatever conclusions you wish from that fact.

Florence McCarthy had such pleasure and satisfaction from her brief stint as the director and producer of for the Irregular Theater Company of Sleepy Hollow that she incorporated the company, and for the next ten years it delivered critically acclaimed, by local critics, productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and even, in Elizabethan costumes, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*.

Patience Moran did not attend Bennett College in South Carolina, the excellent school operated only for young negro women. Instead she became the only young negro woman to study that fall in Columbia Law School on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She was assisted in so doing by her patron, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, and to this day she is a

valued member of his staff, providing outstanding legal advice and services, of which, due to his enthusiastic character, he finds himself often in need; as well as healthy servings of common sense, of which the same.

Mr. Roosevelt, as you will know if you follow the news from America, became the Commissioner of Police of New York City and was recently elected Governor of the State of New York. Last year he and his troop of wealthy Ivy League boys along with cowboys from the Dakotas banded into a militia unit called The Rough Riders and stormed up San Juan Hill in Cuba. As a former military man myself I can confidently say that as a tactic of warfare their charge was useless if not altogether silly, but it did wonders for his political career. He may yet go on to great deeds in America.

Lucy O'Keefe did find a life on the stage and has appeared in several light comedies in both New York and London, but prefers the tragedies of Shakespeare and most recently played Cordelia in a production of *Lear* at the Shaftesbury.

The villains and scoundrels of Tammany Hall have not yet been completely vanquished, I am sorry to say, but they are a mere shadow of their former empire. As Police Commissioner, Mr. Roosevelt reformed the entire force of the city, cleaned out the Augean stable of corruption and set the men in blue on a well-deserved pedestal as New York's finest. Senator Lexow organized hearings into the vast political machine that had dominated New York for over one hundred years. As a result the financial power of the crooks on Fourteenth Street was emasculated. The citizen reformers led by J.P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt now will not suffer the ward heelers to pilfer the public coffers, this being the rightful and sacred domain of bankers.

Dear old Mr. Turner did manage to outlast his doctor's predictions and stayed alive well past the fall equinox. He had the joy of giving away his lovely daughter, Alice, in marriage to the love of her life, James McCarthy. Although

bound to a wheelchair by that time he was as gracious, wise and canny as ever. He passed away, surrounded by his family and friends, on the eve of All Hallows Day. His beloved magnificent stallion, Bannockburn, was found a few days later, lying on his side in his stall whimpering and refusing all food. He was humanely put down and buried in the gardens with a small monument to mark the spot. Horse and horseman have headed off to that undiscovered country from who borne no traveler returns. As, some day, will we all.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Once upon a time Craig Stephen Copland was an English major and studied under both Northrop Frye and Marshall McLuhan at the University of Toronto way back in the 1960's. He never got over his spiritual attraction to great literature and captivating stories. Somewhere in the decades since he became a Sherlockian. He is a recent member of the Bootmakers of Toronto (www.torontobootmakers.com), and mildly addicted to the sacred canon. In real life he writes about and serves as a consultant for political campaigns in Canada and the USA (www.ConservativeGrowth.net), but would abandon that pursuit if he could possibly earn a decent living writing about Sherlock Holmes.

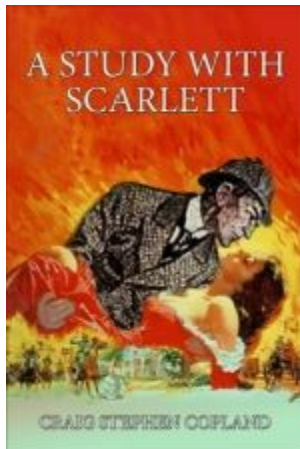
HISTORIC NOTES

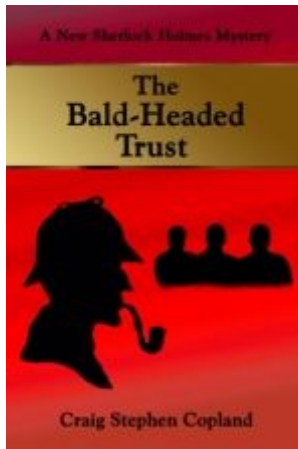
According to The Canon the events of *The Buscombe Valley Mystery* took place in June 1889. Accordingly, the historic references are more or less accurate and set in that same year, or sort of close to it.

The only major exception is The Plaza Hotel, which did not open until 1907, but it is just too fine a place in too great a location to substitute with anything else.

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